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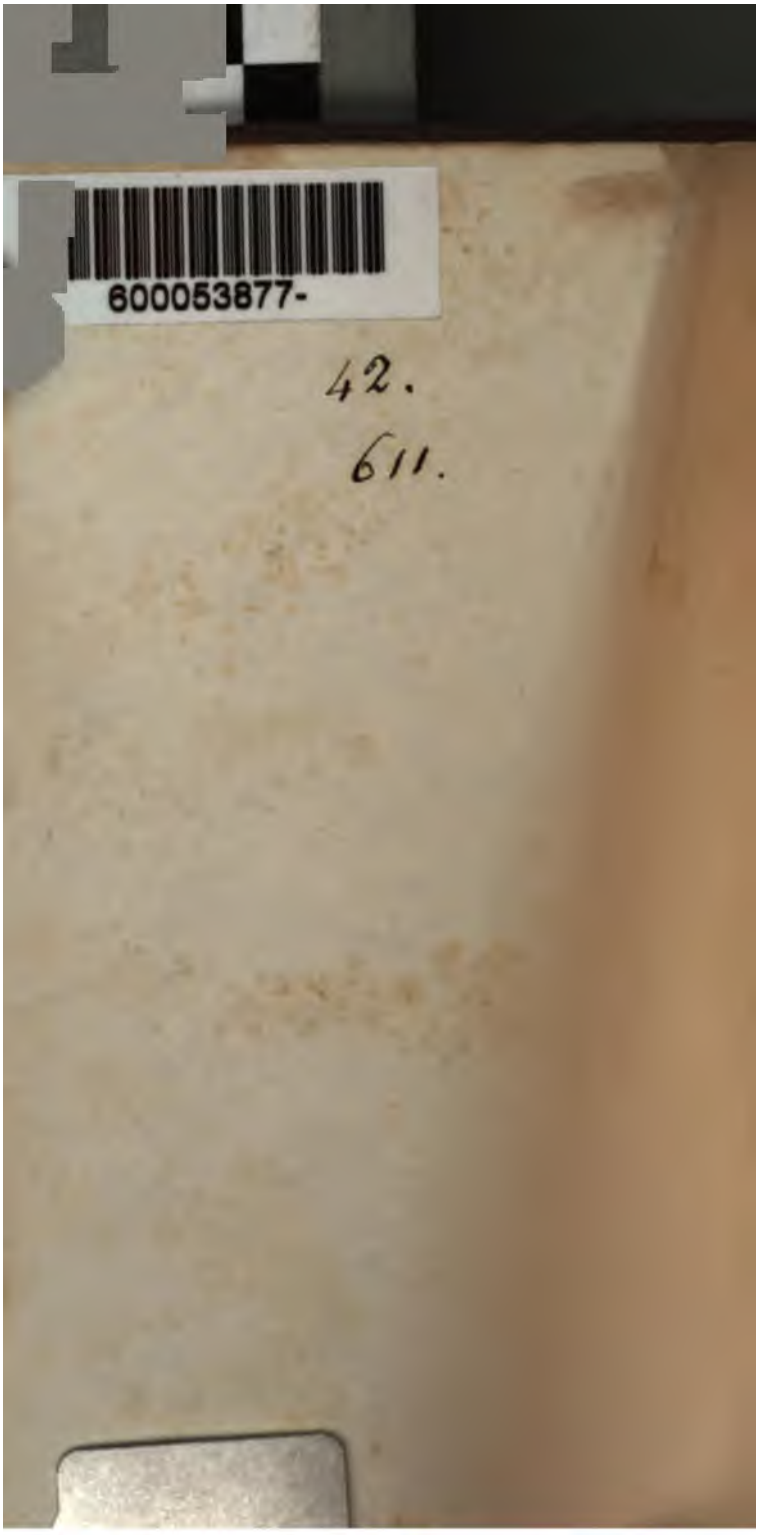
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THE

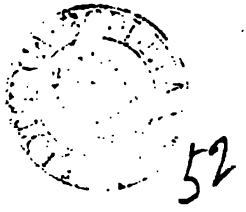
MANŒUVRING MOTHER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE HISTORY OF A FLIRT."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



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THE

MANŒUVRING MOTHER.

CHAPTER I.

Sir John and Lady Wetheral were blessed with four fine little girls, who promised to be all the fond heart of a parent could wish; for, as her ladyship observed with pride, "their forms were perfect, and their features were faultless." There was no exuberance of shape to rectify, there was no limb distorted, and, above all, there were no thick ankles, or dumpy-looking hands to shock a refined taste. The four girls were sprightly, lovely little beings, who would in due time create an immense sensation, and ultimately form connexions with noblemen, or with "county

kings,' which was even more desirable. Sir Watkin Williams Wynn was considered "Prince of Wales," and there were one or two gentlemen who might claim the title of King of Shropshire, if immense property conferred that title. The Miss Wetherals were born distinguished looking, and their career would be triumphant. Lady Wetheral loved also an even number; *four* daughters were not too alarming: five or three would have been an indefinite half-vulgar fraction. Her ladyship hated any thing vulgar.

But events are not in our own hands; and the systems we prepare and digest with patient calculation are overturned in one luckless moment by unforeseen circumstances. Lady Wetheral had scarcely decided in her own mind, that five daughters were an indefinite vulgarity, when another helpless innocent appeared to crush her hopes, and disturb her tranquillity. This was, indeed, a blow. All fear of increasing her family had passed from Lady Wetheral's mind so completely, that it was an overpowering disappointment. Five years had stolen away since the birth of

Clara, and now to recommence the troubles and miseries of nursing, with an uncertain vista before her! Suppose she had twelve? suppose she had fifteen? suppose she had five-and-twenty? where might all this end? How very provoking and vexatious!

Lady Wetheral felt it was vain to utter lamentations: she must lie up, and take care of herself, and avoid the children's noise, and do exactly as she had done before under the same affliction. It *might* prove an heir. If so, her ladyship would not complain: a son would secure the entailed property, and keep up the family name and honours. The name of Wetheral would be extinguished, unless a son resumed the honourable title after poor Sir John was gone, and a fine aristocratic-looking boy ranging through the castle would be a proud sight, certainly. He might marry a duke's heiress. Yes, a magnificent boy *would* be welcomed.

Nothing could exceed Lady Wetheral's chagrin at giving birth in due time to a daughter. Her anger was scarcely repressed by her command of temper, or by the lectures

of her unworldly husband. Lady Wetheral loved her husband with the utmost propriety, too, and never acted in decided opposition to his expressed wishes, but she turned in disgust from his arguments, and generally contrived to manœuvre his good nature into an unwilling approval of her plans, by unceasing fluency, and a code of principles, which bewildered and silenced him. Sir John Wetheral only endured the fate of many husbands, who are linked with "remarkably chatty clever women:" he objected, demurred, and gradually yielded to views which he disapproved, but could never successfully combat. His first visit to his lady's chamber, after the unwelcome little stranger's appearance upon the stage of life, was characteristic, and displayed the principles which influenced the heart and conduct of each parent.

"Well, Sir John, shake hands, love; but we need not congratulate each other. I did hope a son might have repaid me for all this annoyance, but here is another wretched girl, and the little animal looks determined to live."

"Glad of it, Gertrude," and Sir John We-

theral stroked its little cheek gently and fondly.

"How can you say so, my love! I have made arrangements for my four girls, which had comfortably and completely satisfied my mind, but this child is an excrescence, which destroys my comfort entirely."

"Include her in your arrangements, my dear."

"Nonsense, Sir John! Anna Maria will be out in five years, and I have arranged that she shall marry Tom Pynsent."

"Tom devil!" cried Sir John Wetheral, impatiently.

Lady Wetheral possessed the enviable faculty of becoming deaf to observations and epithets, which did not harmonize with her opinions. She did not, therefore, hear her husband's exclamation, but proceeded in a languid tone of voice.

"Isabel I have resolved to give in proper time to Charles Bligh, who will be a baronet when she appears in public, for I am sure old Sir Charles is dropsical; and, if that poor sickly Lord Ennismore lives to come of

age, he will do for Julia. Clara is a handsome girl, and I look very high for *her*, but I never dreamed of having another plague upon my hands. I quite made up my mind it was to be a son, and this unlooked-for disappointment worries me to death."

"You are always calculating, Gertrude. You are always sketching out folly, and scheming plans for future mortification. Who the deuce would talk of Tom Pynsent, who is just sent off to school, or of Charles Bligh, whom we have never seen, or of Lord Ennismore, who can't live a twelvemonth, and of poor Clara, who is destined for the man in the moon! Prove yourself a good wife and mother, my dear, and leave the children's destinies to develop themselves as God pleases."

"You men, my love, are very indolent, and always trust to casualities: I never do."

"How the deuce are you to catch Tom Pynsent, Gertrude? If you ladies begin intriguing so early ——."

Lady Wetheral waved her hand languidly. "Don't express yourself so coarsely, my love."

"Your manner is refined, I confess,"

answered her husband, smiling, "but your matter is equally coarse with the speech you deprecate: you are already appropriating your children, without considering their affections, or the characters of the boys you are designing for them so placidly. As far as I can judge, Tom Pynsent is a blackguard."

"Never mind that, my love: boys and men are very different beings. My arrangements are complete on the score of my four daughters' ultimate success, but this unfortunate child is a bar sinister. Her birth will lessen my girl's fortunes."

"She shall be my own child, and my own care," returned Sir John Wetheral.

"By all means, love, and a pretty mess you will make of it: I dare say she will be a 'Jack,' or a very decided young lady, as all girls are who are petted by fathers; but my daughters will be disposed of before she quits the nursery, therefore, her example will not influence their characters."

"What is her name to be?" asked Sir John, as he fondled the infant in his arms, and kissed its cheek.

"Call her what you please, Sir John; she is to be your care now, not mine. If you think a name necessary, let it be your own choice."

"Then I name her Christobel, after my good old aunt, Gertrude."

"A delightful name, my love, and after an excellent model. Christobel was a heavenly-minded, frightful old maid, and your fifth daughter may resemble her in every respect."

"Let it be so. My aunt was a woman of strong affections, and of powerful abilities, and, if this child possesses half her excellence, she will be a treasure to me in my old age."

"I dare say she will be a great comfort to you, love," said Lady Wetheral, in a sleepy tone, "but, suppose the nurse is summoned for Miss Christobel—I am inclined to sleep."

The child was soon taken from Lady Wetheral's arms, and consigned to the distant apartment which constituted the nursery. Sir John also rose to depart, but his lady's languid voice detained him.

"Sir John!"

"Yes, dear."

"I think I shall require change of air after all this."

"Certainly; where would you like to move. Shall we go to the sea-side?"

"No, love, the sea air is too keen; but I half promised the Tyndals to pay them a visit after my confinement."

"The infant will inconvenience them in their present house, Gertrude."

"I do not mean to take the infant, Sir John, on that account; besides, my nights would be dreadfully disturbed; no, I shall leave Christobel with you, love, and only take Anna Maria with me for a fortnight."

"I am not included in your 'arrangements, then?'"

"My love, you know I require great quiet, and at the Tyndals every thing is so agreeably methodical and peaceful, I shall recover my strength quickly; then, you know, dear, the Pynsents live within a short drive; I shall, perhaps, see a great deal of the Pynsents."

"That will be a nuisance, certainly, as you do not like Mrs. Pynsent, but you will not be

disturbed by her frequent visits, for the disinclination is mutual."

"You are so obtuse, love. I am going to the Tyndals on purpose to renew my acquaintance with Mrs. Pynsent, and I trust we shall be very intimate."

"What, with the woman you denounce as vulgar, and contradictory?"

"I have argued these things with you, Sir John, till my patience is nearly exhausted, and you are still benighted on a subject so closely interwoven with my happiness. I tell you I am going on purpose to effect a scheme, and I take Anna Maria with me, to prepossess Mrs. Pynsent in her favour."

"And what the deuce, Gertrude, makes you wish to prepossess a woman so disagreeable as you describe Mrs. Pynsent to be? Why can't you keep away?"

"My love, I tell you Anna Maria is destined for Tom."

"And what has Tom to do with his mother? He is at Eton. You had better take lodgings near Eton, if you want to catch Tom."

"I can argue with you no more, Sir John. Your ideas are so very limited, it is impossible to graft a plan upon them. It is well your daughters have a mother who is anxious to establish them in life, since their father would effect nothing. If I was on my death-bed, my last hours would be horrified by visions of my daughters' pairing off with curates or lieutenants."

"And pray, where do you look for future bishops and Wellingtons, but among curates and lieutenants?" cried Sir John, warmly.

"Indeed, Sir John, you make me sick with your levelling principles," retorted Lady Wetheral, rising in her bed; "my health is far from strong; you have given me a severe headache, and I do request you will never again breathe the word 'curate;' it puts such wretched thoughts into my mind. Fancy Anna Maria shuffling after a fat country curate, smelling of onions, and bawling at a row of charity-children! or, Julia married to your friend Lesley, handing her basket upon a baggage-waggon! Pray, my love, send Thompson to me with some tea, and

never let this disagreeable subject be renewed between us. I think I am very poorly."

Sir John was long habituated to resign his opinions when they affected his lady's health; and, on this occasion, he renounced them with his usual good humour.

"Well, Gertrude, get rid of your aches and pains, and you shall become intimate with Mrs. Pynsent, and catch her son Tom, if it will give you pleasure. I don't like to see you nervous and ill."

"And my love," continued her ladyship, who saw the happy moment was attained for nforcing her wishes, "do not use that very coarse expression 'catch.' You always tell me I am resolved to 'catch' Tom Pynsent. I do not like the word."

"But you say, Gertrude, you mean to give him to Anna Maria; surely you must catch him first."

"We ought never to express ourselves coarsely, my love. I certainly do mean to make Tom my son-in-law, but I have no intention of seizing his person. I did not think *you* were roughly handled, but my

mother decided upon your becoming my husband long before you addressed me."

"She did, did she?"

"To be sure, and you fell into the snare as agreeably as Pynsent will walk into mine. My mother always said that men were puppets if we concealed the wires, and I believe she was right."

Sir John hummed an opera air, and withdrew. Lady Wetheral sunk into pleasing meditations, and was roused by Thompson appearing with a salver, bearing its delicate porcelain. Thompson was instantly under orders.

"I will not drink my tea strong, Thompson, that will do. How are Miss Anna Maria's hands? Do you use the almond-paste every evening?"

"Oh yes, my lady, and she wears her thick veil doubled over her face when she takes the air."

"Very well. I am going to Court Herbert, as soon as I can quit the house with propriety, and I mean to take my eldest daughter with me; therefore, Thompson, I wish her to look well, and during this cold

weather I wish her to remain altogether in the nursery; the wind will give her that blue look which I cannot endure. Then I wish her not to cry much, which always destroys the complexion; so do not let her fight about with her sisters, but amuse her in your room."

"Yes, my lady."

"Let her lie down two or three hours every day, Thompson, for it makes a girl grow straight, and let her dine upon chicken only. Don't vulgarise her with nasty brown meats."

"Yes, my lady."

"And see, Thompson, that Miss Anna Maria keeps on her gloves, and don't allow her to jump and play about. I particularly wish her to look delicate and ladylike at Court Herbert."

"Oh yes, my lady; and then Hatton is so near, perhaps she will see Master Pynsent."

"All in good time, Thompson. I thought I had something more to say—oh, don't let her drink large draughts of any thing, it swells the stomach; and keep her in your room altogether, for she may learn odd words

from the nursery-maids, and that would distract me."

"I will remove her from the nursery immediately, my lady," replied the obedient Thompson.

"There now, take every thing away, and keep the door shut, that I may not hear the baby scream. I suppose the nurse is healthy, and all that, Thompson?"

"I believe so, my lady."

"Very well, I think I am going to sleep now, so do not come near me till I ring."

Thompson departed with stealthy steps, and closed the scarlet baized doors which separated the nursery apartments from the wing which contained her lady's boudoir and sleeping chamber; but no precautions could deaden the piercing screams which issued from the unfortunate Anna Maria during the operation of transplanting her little person from the pleasures of companionship to the desolate advantages of Thompson's sitting-room.

Rage crimsoned every feature, and swelled her little heart almost to bursting. In vain Thompson assured the angry girl how neces-

sary the translation would prove towards her future establishment — how impossible it was for a young lady to succeed in after life if her hands were purple, and her nose red, with giving way to excessive emotion. Anna Maria became more intractable, and her three sisters advocated her cause. There was an "emeute" in the nurseries of Wetheral Castle. Anna Maria screamed violently, and the shrill sound was caught up and perpetuated by her party. Thompson was at fault, but she tried to gain time by the protocol system.

"Listen, my dear Miss Anna Maria, while I explain to you the system your mamma wishes you to pursue."

"I won't listen!" screamed Anna Maria.

"We won't listen!" shouted her supporters.

"Then you will never marry Master Pynsent," cried Thompson, with incautious indignation.

This threat raised the defiance of the whole group, and the tumult became deafening. A bell rang violently.

"There, young ladies!" exclaimed Thompson, "now you will get into a fine scrape!"

Lady Wetheral was scandalized at the rude sounds which had penetrated into her chamber, and Thompson's statement utterly confounded her.

"I am sure, Thompson, I do not know how to make arrangements for such conduct. I suppose they must have their own way, which is very disagreeable, but you know I cannot produce Miss Anna Maria at Court Herbert, with swelled features and a sulky face. Let her do as she likes then, Thompson; we can't help ourselves."

Thus ended the insurrection in Wetheral Castle, which even the infant appeared to enjoy, as it crowed, and nearly kicked itself out of her nurse's arms, when the tumult was loudest. She then predicted it would delight in stirring sounds, and become a fearless character.

This *emeute* produced serious results, which Lady Wetheral had not anticipated, but which ever succeeds to power wielded by weak and unsteady hands. Miss Anna Maria be

came gradually dictator, and maintained her opinions and determinations with such unshaken obstinacy, that her mother as gradually resigned her will, and submitted to the imperious dictates of her eldest daughter. Her mind was exclusively bent upon securing Tom Pynsent; and, in the anxious hope of forwarding her plans, she suffered her power to depart into other hands, and beheld her own children forming a strong party in opposition to all her expressed opinions. She lamented her weakness when too late, to Thompson.

"The young ladies, Thompson, put me quite on the shelf, and oppose me in every thing. They will never marry properly. Anna Maria's hands are not so white as they were when I could insist upon her wearing gloves; and Julia's feet are getting extremely broad. She will insist upon walking in easy shoes. All my arrangements are useless; and it makes me miserable to find Sir John as lax as ever in his notions. What a thing he will make of that ugly little Christobel!"

"Every one thinks, my lady, little Miss Chrissy will turn out a very fine child," said poor Thompson, who detested the new dynasty.

"Nonsense, Thompson, don't tell me any thing called Christobel can be decent-looking; and, as I do not attend to her, I am sure her hands and feet will be unproducible, but I never trouble myself about it, for she is Sir John's pet; and men's pets are always masculine, coarse women. Perhaps, when Anna Maria is Mrs. Pynsent, she will introduce her sister to somebody who may not object to a coarse kind of wife; but, I confess, I have no hopes for a young woman called Christobel, and named, too, after a frightful spinster."

This latter conversation took place on the eve of Anna Maria's introduction, five years subsequent to the rebellion which decided the downfall of Lady Wetheral's power, and transferred the sceptre into the hands of her children. The daily occurrences of the nursery are marked by sameness; there is little to vary its routine. Let us turn now to the period when the lives of the sisters began to take their colouring from the sentiments of their parents, and to suffer the trials and sorrows incidental to existence.

CHAPTER II.

The introduction of Miss Wetheral produced an immense sensation in Wetheral Castle. Nothing could exceed Lady Wetheral's delight in the confusion of selecting becoming articles of dress. How great was her pride of heart, her smile of triumph, as she gazed upon Anna Maria in her gay apparel, preparing for her first *entrée* into public! Yet, the occasion was melancholy, and ill-suited to be the chosen hour to launch youth and beauty upon the ocean of life.

It was at an assize-ball, at Shrewsbury, then the metropolis of the north midland counties, where Miss Wetheral burst upon the astonished sight. When the wretched felon, under sentence of death, lay languishing in his cell, awaiting the approaching hour of execution; while the clergyman was speak-

ing hope to the soul, and leading the despairing heart to rest for forgiveness on the mercy and sufferings of its Redeemer; then did the irons which bound his trembling hands vibrate to the roar of carriages which rolled rapidly and furiously to the scene of festivity. Then did the neighbouring country pour forth her highest and loveliest; and the moans of repentant sinners, on the verge of ascending the scaffold, were forgotten in the brilliant throng, and lost in the lively repartee, or well-turned compliment.

The assize-ball was then the arena for debutants; the one green spot which decorated the dullness of a long twelvemonth; the hope, the anxiety of hundreds. That ill-judged hour for gaiety is now consigned to silence. The march of intellect has trodden down *that* unholy practice, and given an outward semblance, at least, of better feelings. It is assuredly better taste.

It was a proud moment when Anna Maria visited the nursery, to display her first ball dress, and receive expressions of wonder and delight at her appearance. The sisters

broke from their romps to examine the ornaments which glittered on her neck; and a row of maid-servants, who were introduced into the nursery to see Miss Wetheral, curtseyed in profound admiration. She was indeed a creature to be gazed at. Isabel received an incurable wound upon her peace from the interview, and never more returned to her once happy games of puss in the corner. Anna Maria was but one year her senior, yet she was dressed in muslin and satin, wore a diamond necklace, and had been to the assize-ball. Why could not she also partake in such delights? Why was she to play with her sisters in the nursery, while Anna Maria was dancing at assize-balls?

Lady Wetheral tried to argue Isabel into docility, but her mind could not perceive the sense of her parent's reasoning. "My dear child, your sister will soon marry, and then you will appear in her place. You know nothing is so inconvenient as having two daughters out at the same time. While gentlemen are disputing which is the best look-

ing, the young ladies lose their novelty, and cannot expect to marry well."

"But, mamma, I don't want to marry; I want to dance, and look as handsomely-dressed as Anna Maria did at the assize-ball."

"Nonsense, Isabel! you are as pertinacious as your father, and just as blind. Wait till your sister is married, and she will introduce you. Perhaps next year may produce wonders; your sister is exceedingly admired."

"So she *may* be, while I am out. I shall not interfere with her, you know, for I shall be dancing all the time."

"I cannot argue with such a limited intellect as you appear to possess, Isabel. I have made my arrangements, and cannot break through them. You will appear when your sister is Mrs. Pynsent. Tom Pynsent was very attentive to Anna Maria at the ball."

"Then I'll beg Tom Pynsent to make haste, I declare!" exclaimed Isabel.

"Do not be vulgar and unlady-like, Isabel, and promise me you will make no coarse allusions to Tom Pynsent. I should be ex-

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"Do not be vulgar and unlady-like, Isabel, and promise me you will make no coarse allusions to Tom Pynsent. I should be ex-

tremely shocked at such a line of conduct. I do not absolutely say Anna Maria *will* secure Tom, but I trust and hope such an event is in fruition; and if so, you shall immediately be brought forward. Two girls out at once is folly."

Isabel was nothing daunted by her mother's objection; and she returned openly and constantly to the attack, which soon exhausted the few efficient reasons urged by her antagonist. An incident at once decided the propriety of stopping the mouth of an alarming witness, and put an end to further discussion. Isabel was allowed to descend into the drawing-room, after Anna Maria's debut, as Lady Wetheral observed it would prove a judicious step towards giving her manner its first polish; and the transition from the nursery to the trials of society would be less felt by a gradual initiation into its forms.

Isabel was not to converse, or offer an opinion, upon any subject; she was not in any wise to infringe upon her sister's prerogative, or draw attention towards herself; but she was to observe silently the proprieties

of life — to learn by close attention the observances, the graceful bend of reception, the easy flow of local conversation, and the thousand agreeable nothings comprised in receiving company. Upon all this was Isabel to meditate; but no silly compliment offered by a young man was to be understood or replied to by herself; no gracious invitation was to be accepted, no remark whatsoever was to induce her to put herself forward. Upon these hard terms, Isabel was received in her mother's apartments; and she endured the sight of her "senior by only one year," receiving the crowds which frequented Wetheral Castle, dressed with elegance, admired, courted, and surrounded with flattery in all its proteus forms.

Isabel long suffered the keen feelings of envy to war in her heart; not envy towards Anna Maria, whom she equally admired and loved — but envy of that state which she longed ardently to partake. In one hapless hour, Isabel forgot her vow of silence, and spoke, as most backward young ladies *will* speak, when pressed beyond endurance, most

rashly and unadvisedly. Lady Spottiswoode and her daughter had been long dilating on the forthcoming races, and the full ordinary and ball which every one anticipated, when Miss Spottiswoode, turning to Isabel, asked when they should have the pleasure of including her among the gay young ladies. Isabel, thrown off her guard by the question, instantly replied, colouring with her earnest feelings—

"Oh! Miss Spottiswoode, I hope I shall soon be out; but it depends upon Anna Maria's marrying Tom Pynsent." Lady Wetheral for one instant completely lost her self-possession. Sir John laughed aloud. The Spottiswoodes were too delicate to take notice of the remark. They rose and examined some portfolios of prints which lay upon the table, and endeavoured to change the current of thought, by again dwelling upon the ordinary and race-ball; but the shock was too severely felt to be easily overcome. There was a painful silence, and the Spottiswoodes kindly took their leave.

"There!" said Lady Wetheral, applying the vinaigrette to her nose, "Lady Spottiswoode

is gone to report my arrangements to the world, and Isabel's stupid folly has occasioned it. Did I not insist upon her silence?"

"You should have taught your girls discretion, Gertrude," replied Sir John, "by being discreet yourself. Why did you commit your arrangements, as you call them, to the keeping of a child who is suffering under them? You should teach them to practise the art of speaking, before you thrust your children headlong from the nursery into company. You are rightly served: this will prevent all future mistakes."

"You may say what you please, Sir John; I cannot exhaust myself by arguing with such very limited ideas. I am very ill, and extremely shocked at Isabel's conduct: pray let her attend the race-ball, or do what she likes: I am unequal to combat determined obstinacy."

"May I go to the race-ball, then? Shall I go out with Anna Maria, and see her admired, and dance myself for hours together?" exclaimed Isabel, throwing herself on her knees in a transport.

"Go just where you like," replied her mother, languidly; "you will be stupid and vulgar whenever you emerge, therefore time or place is a matter of little moment. Take your own way, for my authority is quite set aside."

Up rose Isabel, attentive only to the words which pronounced her release, and, bounding round the room, careless of remark, she rushed upstairs to make known her triumph.

"Thompson, Thompson! I am going to the race-ball in July. I am to go out with Anna Maria, and dance like mad! here goes!"

And Isabel began dancing round the nursery in the wildest spirits, imitating, to the best of her ability, Anna Maria's elegant manner and step.

Thus was Lady Wetheral a second time defeated in the nearest wish of her heart; but her resentment only extended to keeping her bed for two days, during which she complained to Thompson of illness and excessively shocked feelings. On the third day, she was eagerly and agreeably employed in selecting a proper wardrobe for Isabel.

There could not be a more striking contrast than that which was displayed in the person and manners of the two elder sisters, and their effect upon society was equally distinct. Anna Maria concealed an irritable temper under an exterior peculiarly elegant, and manners strikingly gentle and fascinating: her popularity, therefore, was great, and her steps attended by admirers of both sex, who were drawn towards her by the force of extreme sweetness of manner. All men toasted the lovely Miss Wetheral, and all women confessed she was agreeable as she was charming, yet Anna Maria passed on her way without receiving offers from one sex, or forming a friendship with an individual of the other.

Isabel's artless high spirits and warm heart was, on the other hand, misunderstood, and few did her justice in public. She danced too much, and laughed too loud, and gentlemen sought her often as an agreeable relief from the refined insipidity of her companions, which told against her in society. Lady Wetheral cautioned her in vain.

"I wish, Isabel, you would not jump so

high, and look so pleased with your partners; it is quite inelegant, and will make you disliked. No other young lady looks pleased, and the gentlemen get grinning and talking round you, to the exclusion of your sister and many others. Pray refrain."

"It is my nature to be happy," replied Isabel, laughing, "and my friends may outtalk me if they like. I only desire to chat and enjoy myself in peace."

"For shame, Isabel! you are not aware how you create enemies by such conduct. I was ashamed to see you racing down the middle and up again, with Tom Pynsent, at Lady Spottiswoode's carpet-dance. A young lady should never engross a gentleman's attention so conspicuously."

"Tom Pynsent amused me extremely, mamma: he was telling college stories, and off we capered without caring who remarked us."

"You are remarkably vulgar and underbred, my dear," resumed her mother, "and I have no hopes of your establishment. I am very much surprised at Anna Maria's beauty

failing to elicit an offer; perhaps Julia may do better when she appears, but my hopes chiefly rest upon Clara. Her style of beauty is very magnificent."

Isabel's happy disposition received these shocks with inimitable good humour. She listened to daily remarks upon her want of elegance, and believed in her total exemption from the gifts which Nature had lavished upon her elder sister; but her mind scorned the idea of mourning over a useless grief. She cared not for extraneous advantages which could not reach the mind: she never entered a ball-room without a profusion of dancing engagements; and if she was liked and followed, even in the presence of her handsome sister, what did she care for mere beauty?

Lady Wetheral at last yielded the point, and allowed Isabel to choose her own mode of pleasing. Her taste turned with horror from her "unfortunate Isabel," but she ceased to look at, or remark upon, her *brusquerie*. She told Thompson, "some men took odd fancies to healthy, fat-looking, smiling girls, and probably Isabel might please some old

rich widower or stupid retired bachelor, and marry at last: she would be a foil to her sisters, at any rate."

Lady Wetheral was right: an odd, "retired bachelor" did admire Isabel precisely for her healthy, good-humoured looks; and, in process of time, he advanced, slowly and cautiously, to the attack; but his manner concealed the matter long to all eyes but those of her father. Lady Wetheral was blind to the very *dénouement*.

"I can't imagine why that tiresome old Boscawen comes here every other morning, Sir John, sitting for hours and saying nothing: pray don't ask him to stay dinner again — he makes me ill."

"He is a great friend of mine, Gertrude: I like Boscawen."

"I know you like unaccountable people, love; but he worries *me* to death, and he will sit at dinner between Anna Maria and Isabel. I don't consider Isabel, but he keeps Tom Pynsent away from Anna Maria, and never enters into any sort of conversation."

"He thinks more than he says, my dear."

"I hate people who think: thinking makes every thing worse: luckily, I have quite given up thinking about Isabel, or her loud laugh would kill me."

"Boscawen does not object to Isabel's joyous laugh, Gertrude; he hopes to hear it in perpetuity."

"I wish he would take her to himself, then," replied his lady, gently yawning, and taking up a novel.

"Boscawen has proposed for Isabel," said Sir John, seriously.

"How can you talk such nonsense, Sir John! if the old man proposes to any body, it will certainly be to Anna Maria. I saw he admired her exceedingly — so does every body: she is very captivating."

"Boscawen has proposed for Isabel, however," he returned; "and though he is too advanced in years for a young girl's speculation, yet, if she could fancy him, I think she might be happy. I wish you to speak to your daughter upon the subject, Gertrude. If she has the slightest disinclination to Boscawen,

do not mention him a second time: I will not allow her to be talked into matrimony."

"Then, talk to her yourself, Sir John. I am quite overpowered by the surprise. I was so certain Boscawen admired Anna Maria; but since he has the bad taste to prefer Isabel, she ought not to demur an instant. Boscawen is very rich, and I dare say he will act very handsomely as to settlements. When old men marry young wives, they ought to pay for the distinction. Isabel will be very foolish if she declines him."

Anna Maria at this moment appeared at the door, and Lady Wetheral's ideas excursed at the sight of her beautiful daughter, still so admired, yet unsought.

"Well, my dear, I am glad you are come at this moment; here is Mr. Boscawen proposing for Isabel, and no one asks for you: I can't understand it. Perhaps, my love, if *you* chatted a *little* more—but you must 'take' in time. Old Boscawen is no great things, only he is so rich; there is no saying when Isabel may be a gay widow."

"Does my sister accept Mr. Boscawen?"

asked Anna Maria, in dulcet tones, without replying to her mother's hints.

"She will do so, if she has common sense; but we have sent for her. Your father is to talk to her."

Isabel obeyed the summons, which prayed for her appearance in Lady Wetheral's *boudoir*. She entered laughing.

"I am sure I know the reason of your summons, papa. Mr. Boscawen has written to you."

"And you will not be so mad as to refuse such an excellent establishment," cried her mother, earnestly.

"Stay, Gertrude; I will not allow Isabel to be influenced."

"He can make any settlement you please, Isabel," continued her mother.

"Gertrude ——"

"He is old and ugly, Isabel"—Lady Wetheral rose unconsciously from the sofa in her energy, perfectly deaf to her husband's call to order—"he is old and ugly; but no girl in her senses would refuse such an establishment. You cannot stake a handsome face

against a fortune, which will purchase all a woman prizes most. You will be respectable and enviable, for you will command every thing that is covetable in this world!"

Sir John was distressed and indignant at the sentiment conveyed in his lady's discourse; but he knew it was vain to contend with a mind anchored upon the world. He turned to Isabel.

"I wish to know, my love, if Mr. Boscawen's offer is disagreeable to you. If you reject his suit, *I* will take care he shall not offend again."

Lady Wetheral fixed her eyes with intense anxiety upon Isabel, who promptly replied the offer had been made with her knowledge and concurrence.

"My dear Isabel, I thought you would not overlook such advantages," cried her ladyship, embracing her daughter with unfeigned delight.

"Isabel," said her father, "you wish to marry Mr. Boscawen?"

"Indeed, papa, I do."

"You wish to quit your home, my love, and live altogether with Mr. Boscawen?"

"Yes, indeed, I do, papa."

"Are you aware, Isabel, that in marrying Mr. Boscawen you must become steady and obedient, and submit to his wishes and views?"

"Perfectly, papa."

"Are you aware, my love, that when you have become a wife, you must quit home for ever, and remain with Mr. Boscawen at Brierly, to nurse him in sickness, and console him in sorrow?"

"Oh, yes, papa, I know all that perfectly; and I shall like very much to nurse Mr. Boscawen, he is so good-tempered."

"Yet, listen to me, Isabel, I have much to say," and her father's countenance and manner became impressively serious. "You are too young to understand the solemn vows you must make at the altar. I know Boscawen is a good man, or I should not have listened to his offer when he proposed for a girl young enough to be his daughter. You

must have given him great encouragement, Isabel."

"Oh yes, papa, I *did*. I told him I would be sure to be his wife, if you had no objection, and I hope you do not mean to prevent it."

Lady Wetheral became indignant at her husband's serious view of matrimony, and she had recourse to her vinaigrette, as usual, upon exciting subjects.

"I cannot imagine, Sir John, why you should endeavour to make doubts for Isabel, when such an offer may never occur again—certainly not to Isabel, who has so little appearance. It quite provokes me to hear you raising difficulties about a nonsensical affair of marriage. Isabel will marry like other girls, and get on like other people."

"I do not wish my daughter to marry like other girls, Gertrude. I wish Isabel to be happy and respected."

"And who will deny her being very happy, Sir John, when she has every luxury her mind can invent; and who denies a woman's

respectability when she is rich and well connected? Nonsense, my dear."

"We never agree in sentiment, Gertrude," said her husband, gravely.

"How can I see things, love, in the strange light you represent them? My mother never read *me* such lectures as you preach to Isabel, and I was scarcely her age when I married. I was congratulated on my good fortune, and you know we both drove immediately to Hamlet's. Pray let Isabel enjoy herself."

"Oh pray, papa, let me have Mr. Boscawen," cried Isabel, clasping her hands as the tears burst from her dark, blue eyes. "Do not say I am not to have Mr. Boscawen! and he has ordered me a tilbury cloak upon the certainty of my accepting him; it is to have a leopard's claw as a fastening round my throat! Oh papa, papa!"

"I have not uttered a word about refusing Mr. Boscawen, my love."

"Oh, thank you, papa, thank you!" and

Isabel flew to embrace her father. "My own good papa, not to make me miserable!"

"You would be unhappy, then, if I declined Mr. Boscawen, Isabel?"

"Oh, papa, wretched!—the cloak too of no use, and I had so set my heart upon the leopard's claw!"

"A small 'forget-me-not' would have been in better taste, Isabel," observed her mother.

"No, I particularly admire the leopard's claw, because Mr. Boscawen liked it. And then, papa, we are to drive in his tilbury, and I am to have a fur cap with a tassel, and choose it myself—I shall be so happy!"

There was nothing more to be said. Isabel looked upon every thing connected with Mr. Boscawen *en couleur de rose*, and her imagination pictured Brierly as a home of enchantment. She believed her days were to glide away among rural sports and in juvenile assemblies—the summer would be dedicated to haymaking and gathering roses—the winter would be a continuity of music and dancing. If her father's remarks chased the smile from her lips, as he alluded to scenes

of duty and the cares of a family, they were speedily recalled by Lady Wetheral's enumeration of the comforts which must attach to her situation.

"My dear Isabel, your father alarms you; but, trust me, there is nothing alarming in matrimony. You will have a large settlement, and a handsome allowance, therefore every thing will go smoothly. If you have a family, it won't much inconvenience you. Shut out the nurseries with baize doors, and you will be free from noise. I managed very well, for sometimes I did not see or hear you children for weeks."

Mr. Boscawen was admitted as an accepted lover, and Isabel did not regret her acceptance of a man who listened with admiration and interest to her remarks, and who never turned from her *brusquerie* with the disgust her mother could not conceal towards her. Mr. Boscawen at five and forty looked with delight upon Isabel, whose extreme youth and beauty threw a halo around her uneducated mind. Her rich and joyous laugh pleased the taciturn nature of his mind; he

was charmed by her innocence, and untired by her ceaseless prattle; therefore was Mr. Boscawen her constant and loved companion, whom her eye sought in all companies and at all moments, and to whom her inmost thoughts were communicated. She loved to hang upon his arm, and take long walks with her darling Boscawen; she delighted to drive his tilbury, and exhibit the cloak of long promise—to chat freely, and, as she expressed it in confidence to Julia, to rattle away about nothing, and be just as much admired, as though she spoke sense, like Anna Maria.

Isabel's wedding-day was to herself a day of extravagant enjoyment and agreeable confusion. She was going to a home of her own —to be called in future "Mrs. Boscawen," and to receive the compliments of the bridal-party. There was a large company to breakfast, and the Spottiswoodes were of the chosen number who had the pleasure of congratulating Isabel upon her magnificent prospects. Isabel thanked Miss Spottiswoode for her friendly wishes.

"Now, I am married, dear Sophy, I wish

you were all going to do the same thing. I should so have liked four or five weddings at once! but you will all come and see me, and we will have such merriment; won't we, Mr. Boscawen?"

Mr. Boscawen bowed smilingly to Isabel's appeal, and she proceeded—

"I will drive you all in the tilbury, when you come to Brierly; it holds only Mr. Boscawen and myself now, but I dare say we can squeeze four. Mr. Boscawen is very stout, and his coat covers an acre of ground; doesn't it, Mr. Boscawen?"

Lady Wetheral became visibly uneasy at Isabel's loquacity, and endeavoured to change the subject; but Mrs. Boscawen was too happy and too unsuspecting to observe a hint, or detect a look; her heart was full of hope, and revelling in novel situations. She talked on, inviting every body to Brierly, and appealing to Mr. Boscawen if he would not be delighted to have his house as full as it could hold. The bridal carriage drawing to the door relieved Lady Wetheral's distress.

At the parting moment, Isabel preserved

her serenity, while her sisters wept over the kind-hearted companion they were now to lose. Isabel's gentleness of temper, her buoyant spirits, and warm affections, endeared her to all her family-circle, and they doubly valued her excellence when her society was on the eve of being withdrawn for ever. Isabel smiled as radiantly as usual under the repeated embraces of her weeping sisters, and cheered their grief.

"My dear girls, you see I am married, and, as mamma says, I can do what I like, I mean to have each of you with me in turn, so pray do not cry. Julia, you will come first, and we will have such fun, haymaking! shan't we, Mr. Boscawen? And Clara, when *you* come to me, we will gallop over the country on ponies; won't we, Mr. Boscawen?"

Mr. Boscawen kissed Isabel's hand without reply, and her father led her to her carriage. The new equipage struck her eye.

"Oh, mamma! how you will delight in my carriage! It's quite my own; is it not, Mr. Boscawen? When you come to Brierly, we

will drive about all day. You know you said it would be the best part of the show."

Mr. Boscawen had never approved Lady Wetheral's sentiments, and rarely entered into conversation with her. Isabel's observation had its effect; he bowed very coolly to her ladyship, and ordered the postillions to drive on. The carriage was soon lost in the distance. Lady Wetheral was disconcerted at Isabel's unfortunate speech, and she remarked upon it in passing from the colonnade into the breakfast-room.

"Isabel has married much better than I anticipated; but nothing will heal her dreadful propensity to make remarks in the wrong place, and repeat observations improperly. This unladylike want of caution will ruin her reputation as a woman of fashion, but she is no longer 'Miss Wetheral.' Isabel is now Mrs Boscawen."

CHAPTER III.

Julia was now advanced in consequence of Mrs. Boscawen's marriage, and she stepped from Thompson's room into society, as Minerva sprung from the brain of Jupiter, fully armed and equipped for her vocation. Lady Wetheral was greatly pleased with the *air de societé* which Julia displayed in her intercourse with the new world, her playful badinage with gentlemen, and her intuitive knowledge of the "proprieties." Her mother hailed her as a star of promise.

"My dear Sir John, Julia puts me very much in mind of myself, at her age: do you observe the nicety with which she glides through her ceremonies? She is much more brilliant than Anna Maria, and never incau-

tious, like poor Isabel. I shall look very high for Julia."

"Who is to be the doomed man, Gertrude?" asked Sir John, quietly.

"I know you laugh at me, but I don't consider you a proper judge of daughters' educations. You would let them marry any thing, if a stupid curate or poor lieutenant could persuade you they had good hearts!"

"My daughters' hopes of happiness must depend upon their companion having a heart and principles."

"A fiddlestick, Sir John! Does a good heart buy a carriage and four, or can principle purchase comforts? What would Boscawen's heart be without his income? but you have such an odd way of talking. I don't say that a good heart is not very well in its way, but I do insist upon it, money is the first object."

"Such sentiments, Gertrude, are very unfit from a parent's lips. I trust your daughters may marry early in life, to be withdrawn from your influence."

Lady Wetheral burst into tears.

"This is always your cruel way, Sir John, when I am speaking confidentially to you about my children's prospects. I am sure they hear from me the very best sentiments: I have always entreated them to do nothing improper—I have always told them to avoid publicity, and never lose their place in society. If any of my daughters went wrong, I would never see them again."

"What do you mean by 'going wrong,' Gertrude?"

"Why I mean losing their reputation by a conspicuous flirtation with a married man, or running away from the man they marry, or doing any thing which loses a woman her high position in public opinion:—any dereliction of that kind I never—*never* would pardon, and my girls know it. You always do me injustice, Sir John."

Sir John could not behold his lady's tears unmoved; it was his weak point, and his lady was aware of her power. In this instance she triumphed over his weakness, and won an easy victory, for she silenced the grave rebukes which affected her self-love. A kiss of af-

fection on his part dissipated every woeful feeling on the face of her ladyship: its very remembrance was past away.

"Well now, my love, since you are sorry you offended me, I have a great deal to say. I want you particularly to ask Lord Ennismore to Wetheral. Don't look grave, my dear Sir John; the poor fellow is dragging on an odd kind of existence, but still he lives. Just ask him to spend his Christmas with us, and of course his mother must be included in the invitation. I do not coerce young gentlemen, therefore you cannot have fears for their safety. Ask that poor unhealthy creature, at any rate; his lordship has the option of declining an invitation which does not give him satisfaction."

Sir John submitted to the "arrangement," and, most unexpectedly to himself, Lord Ennismore accepted the invitation. Lady Wetheral could not conceal her raptures; Julia also was pleased, and after a long *tête-à-tête* with her mother, she reported the conference to Anna Maria.

"I have had a long lecture from mamma,

but that is nothing new. She has been anxiously beseeching me to captivate poor measly Ennismore, which I had long decided to do before papa issued his invitation, only I amused myself with assuring her I could not endure such a wretched sickly creature. Poor mamma had recourse to all her essence bottles, perfectly fatigued with setting forth his lordship's titles and rent-roll. She says all her hopes are anchored upon myself, as she is sure you will never marry now."

"Does she?" replied Anna Maria, softly and tranquilly.

"Yes, she told me you had passed two years without an offer, and therefore you must be considered *passé*, as Tom Pynsent did not come forward."

A deep blush overspread the cold pale cheek of Anna Maria, but she made no reply.

"Mamma told me if Lord Ennismore did not attach himself to me, I could but try Tom Pynsent, as she very much wished one of us to be established at Hatton; but though I may flirt with Tom Pynsent, I would not marry such a hunting, loud-voiced man."

Anna Maria remained silent; Julia proceeded.

"You will not make a reply, and how can I go on talking without an audience? Mamma takes great pains to plan our attacks, but she deserts us in our hour of need. I am sure she held up Tom Pynsent to you as the one thing needful, and because you did not take to each other, she is quite certain you will remain single."

Anna Maria's lips were compressed, and no sound issued from their portals. Julia looked earnestly in her face, and beheld tears flowing: she threw her arms round her sister's graceful neck and embraced her.

"My dear Anna Maria, tell me why you weep, and why you take mamma's nonsense to heart? Every body loves you, dear Anna, and you will marry in time, though Isabel did go before you."

Anna Maria's heart was too full to give utterance in words, but a violent fit of weeping relieved her, and Julia's embraces won her confidence. She unburthened her sorrow to this affectionate sister.

"I do not regret Isabel's marriage, Julia, or my own singlehood, so lamented by my mother:—it is not that I deplore; but I was taught to—I was assured—" another long fit of weeping succeeded, and again Julia soothed the choking violence of her sister's grief. An interval of calm allowed poor Anna Maria to proceed.

"If I had not been taught to consider Tom Pynsent as an assured lover—if my mother had not persevered in holding him up to my view as a model of perfection, and woven his idea into my very nature, I should not have loved so fondly the man you despise, Julia."

Julia gazed at her sister in mute astonishment, as she grew energetic in her subject.

"If I had foolishly sought his society, I might have merited the pain I have endured; but, Julia, my mother raved about him:—his affections were considered the only proper aim of female ambition—he was courted by her, and he was always near me. My mother sought his fortune, but I attached myself to his person, and I am cast aside by both. Pyn-

sent, I know, believes me ambitious and sordid, and my mother considers me no longer a safe speculation. I have been the victim of her heedless calculations!"

"My dear, dear sister!" exclaimed Julia, bursting into tears.

"Who can repay me for all my useless suffering?" continued Anna Maria, in still more energetic tones, her eyes flashing fire. "Who will return me the peace of mind I have lost—the tranquillity of my early days—the first happy hours of my gaiety? Who had a right to betray my heart, and trample upon my hopes, when I was too young and ignorant of harm to discover the snare? What has my mother done for me? I was her eldest born, her hope, and companion, and what has she done for me but cast me into misery, and made my life a burthen!"

"Oh, my poor dear sister!" cried Julia, in deep distress; "and under your quiet manner, you really loved Tom Pynsent?"

"I loved him truly and for ever," replied Anna Maria, the fire of her dark eyes sinking into humidity, as the current of her thoughts

dwelt alone upon the man she adored. "I can see no faults in the creature you deprecate —he may be the character you describe, but to me he is sacred: I love him, and though he shall never know it, I will die for him."

"Never more will I flirt with Tom Pynsent, oh, never, never!" exclaimed Julia, throwing her arms again round Anna Maria's waist. "If I had known you cared for him, I would not have chatted as I did last night with Tom. Oh, Anna, how you must have suffered, yet how calm you appeared!"

"I care not who engrosses his attention," replied her sister, as the colour rose and subsided in her cheeks. "I care not who loves him, or is loved by him: I am jealous of no one: I love in hopelessness and misery, and he shall never know my agony. Take care, Julia, how you trifle with Lord Ennismore; these hateful flirtations destroy each other's repose; how selfish, how cruel!" Anna Maria shuddered as she spoke.

"I will not try to attach Lord Ennismore," cried Julia, in earnest accents: "your distress has cured me of all intentions; but speak to

papa, Anna Maria, and he will keep Tom Pynsent from the house. You know how kind he always is."

"Not for worlds!" cried Anna Maria, starting up, "not for worlds, Julia! let no one know I am wretched—let no one pity me, or dare to comfort me but yourself—promise, promise me, on your honour."

She took Julia's clasped hands in her own, and, with an impetuosity belonging to her irritable nature, she exacted a solemn vow of silence. Julia gave her assurances with regret, but the vow passed her lips, and from her the secret never transpired. She was the soul of honour in those matters.

After this confidential disclosure on the part of her eldest sister, Julia repulsed every attention offered by Tom Pynsent, and firmly resisted his efforts to attract her notice. Young Pynsent was astonished by a style of manner so suddenly adopted, and so perseveringly kept up towards himself, and at first he resented the cold indifference by an equal display of composed carelessness; but its pertinacity at length piqued his vanity, and in

the end produced a watchfulness which engrossed his whole soul.

Had Julia flirted on with Tom Pynsent, his heart would have been untouched; and his mind, perfectly aware of Lady Wetheral's schemes, had remained free to sport amid the beauty which surrounded him. But Julia's manners, so unaffected, so perfectly guileless, showed such unequivocal avoidance of his society, that vanity took the alarm, and conducted her victim to the very snare he had so long observed and ridiculed. To be disliked by a Wetheral, when all the Shropshire world knew he had long been a favourite speculation of her ladyship—it was not to be endured, and, *coute qui coute*, Tom Pynsent vowed to subdue the cold heart of Julia Wetheral.

Tom Pynsent was not an Apollo, nor did he possess the fascination of more courtly men, to make the subjugation of a lady's heart the amusement of a leisure hour. Tom Pynsent was good-looking, tall, broad set, and loud in speech, as Julia had described him: he was also empty, good-natured, and immoderately fond of fox-hunting. His very large fortune

in perspective gave him the *entrée* of the neighbourhood at all hours, and if Tom Pynsent failed in the soft elegance of speech, or appeared to some disadvantage in the ball-room among his more polished companions, yet upon his attentions were the eyes of woman taught to rest; and many a glance of admiration was bestowed upon the uncouth, ill-dressed Tom Pynsent, which other more gifted swains failed to obtain.

It was the fate of Anna Maria to love this man; and while the cold, stiff manners of the beautiful Miss Wetheral, chilled the approach of distant admirers, her heart was sincerely and really given to Tom Pynsent. It is in vain to argue upon love, which arises from a thousand causes unconnected with personal appearance. Love takes a thousand forms, and defies the power of reason. When Shakespeare gave the "Weaver" charms in the eyes of Titania, he illustrated at once its blindness and its intensity. Tom Pynsent might have sought and won the heart and taste of Miss Wycherly, who regularly attended the hunt and broke in her own

carriage horses, but who could suppose he had power to captivate the gentle and graceful Miss Wetheral?

Lady Spottiswoode was celebrated for the agreeability and number of her carpet dances. Every fortnight produced a gay society at her large mansion in Shrewsbury; and at her parties the county families mixed occasionally with the more humble inhabitants of the town. It was this very mixture which gave Lady Spottiswoode's parties their decided superiority over those of the neighbourhood; for at her house she possessed the advantage of numbers, and she congregated more youth, beauty, and novelty than her country neighbours could ever boast at their *élite*, but smaller, and less pleasant meetings.

Shrewsbury, at the time of Miss Wetheral's introduction, contained many families whose claims to gentility might compete with their own, but whose income excluded them from distant and expensive society. They were always assembled at Lady Spottiswoode's, and, from the variety and novelty which sparkled in her drawing-rooms, her parties were consi-

dered the most delightful reunions in the country. No one ever stayed away from Lady Spottiswoode's, who had the power of locomotion; and it was at Lady Spottiswoode's assemblies that Tom Pynsent carried on his plans for lowering the pride of Julia Wetheral.

Anna Maria beheld in the keenest pain, but with unaltered expression of countenance, his unceasing persecution of her sister: whichever way Julia moved, Tom Pynsent was beside her, or before her; his eyes were eternally watching her actions, and, when Julia was not his partner, he declined joining the dancers. If Julia observed his fixed determination to be attentive, she heeded it not, for she was dancing and flirting with Lord Ennismore, and her heart disdained the man who had deserted her sister, after a long course of ungenerous flirtation, which meant nothing, and which had injured the peace of its object.

Tom Pynsent's character was, however, open, and above-board: he had firmly believed Anna Maria a party in her mother's schemes, and his attentions eliciting no marked return,

it persuaded him her heart was safe, though her ambition might grasp at becoming mistress of Hatton; Julia would have become the equally indifferent object of an unmeaning flirtation, had not her sister's unexpected confidence seared her feelings towards him. But Tom Pynsent, the long-contested Tom Pynsent, the idol of Lady Wetheral's hopes, was now seriously in love with the lively, fascinating Julia, and Love could not teach his nature to dissemble a feeling which once took possession of his heart. He was found out, and quizzed most unmercifully by his companions, but Tom Pynsent had always a "rowland" for their "oliver." Young Charles Spottiswoode attacked him at his mother's party.

"Why, Pynsent, people say you have no eyes for any girl but Julia Wetheral, and you do look dreadfully cut up when she dances with Ennismore, don't you?"

"I dare say I do," replied Pynsent, in his usual loud tone of voice, "and, if I look cut up, you may depend upon it I am so."

"Then you are fairly in for it, Pynsent," laughed his companion.

"Yes, I am, but I suppose I have no chance with that d—d pinched-in waisted lord."

Tom Pynsent's sentiments were given *pro bono publico*, and a group of gentlemen quickly gathered round him, some laughing at his situation, others sympathizing with him. Tom Pynsent never lowered his voice.

"I dare say you are all quizzing me, but I don't care for that. I know I am in love with a devilish fine girl, so I'm not a bit ashamed, and, if that fellow with his mincing steps gets her, I can't help myself, but I'll be hanged if I hunt till I have asked her!"

"We thought you liked the eldest sister, Pynsent?" said Mr. Wycherly.

"Did you? I didn't, though. I like Julia Wetheral, and I don't care who knows it. Laugh away, boys, and hunt by yourselves, till I come among you again."

So saying, Tom Pynsent coolly withdrew from the group, and stationed himself opposite to Julia, who was still dancing with Lord Ennismore.

Anna Maria's ear had drunk in the whole

conversation, which took place near her and her mother, though both were concealed from observation. Lady Wetheral listened, with joy of the deepest and most powerful nature, to the confession of Tom Pynsent's affection for Julia, and the restraints of society scarcely concealed the exhibition of its effects. Anna Maria preserved her calm demeanour, and bore with intrepidity the acknowledgment of his love for another. A common observer would have pitied the cold indifferent character of Miss Wetheral's countenance; none knew the pangs which were silently devouring her existence. She bore the outpourings of her mother's self-congratulation with unflinching steadiness.

"My dear Anna Maria, I have now married two daughters admirably, for Julia will assuredly marry Tom Pynsent very shortly. Did you not hear him say he should ask her before he hunted? Most likely this very night. What will your father say now? I wish he had been here! but I am sure it is time to return home. Where is my dear Julia! oh, Lord Ennismore is dancing with

her, I see; Lord Ennismore will do for Clara, whom I shall bring out immediately. Julia will be Mrs. Pynsent, of Hatton, and Clara shall be Lady Ennismore. I have established my daughters exactly as I could wish. Poor Isabel did very well for old Boscawen, because she was rather vulgar. Well, my love, just tell Julia we must order the carriage."

Anna Maria obeyed her mother's request, and rose to approach Julia, who was at that moment seated between Tom Pynsent and Lord Ennismore. Julia's quick eye saw her advancing, and she left the gentlemen, to bound forward to meet her sister.

"Julia, the carriage is ordered; are you cool enough to prepare for your return home?"

The words were calmly and distinctly uttered, but Julia was struck by the hollow tones and dull eye of Anna Maria. She took her hand affectionately.

"My dear sister, you are ill?"

"No," replied Anna Maria, calmly.

"Yes, you look ill. I know your countenance well, and it looks very disturbed; tell me what is the matter?"

"Nothing." Anna Maria trembled as she stood. Julia became alarmed.

"Take no notice," continued Anna Maria, "but let us return home. Are you ready?"

"Yes, now this moment; let us go."

Lord Ennismore and Tom Pynsent advanced, and each offered an arm to Julia, who quietly gave her hand to his lordship. Tom Pynsent followed, but offered no assistance to her eldest sister, who clung to Julia's disengaged arm. They joined Lady Wetheral.

"My dear Julia, you are not heated, I hope? I am sorry to call you away from the dance; but I believe it is late, and Anna Maria is fatigued. Sir John sits up for us."

A little change took place among the party, and a little bustle ensued, preparatory to their departure. Julia withdrew her arm from Lord Ennismore for an instant, to adjust her shawl, and Lady Wetheral took immediate advantage of the movement. She glided to Lord Ennismore, and took possession of his deserted arm.

"Allow me, my dear lord. You must take care of us, and give us safely back to Sir

John, you know, according to promise. Anna Maria, I bespeak Lord Ennismore's other arm for you; thank you, my lord, we are very comfortably arranged. Julia, my love, Fate gives you to Mr. Pynsent *pour le moment.* Now shall we bow to Lady Spottiswoode?"

The little *ruse* succeeded. Tom Pynsent walked to the carriage with Julia, and he opened the subject so near and so interesting to his heart, boldly and without preamble.

"Miss Julia, I wish to know if you like Lord Ennismore?"

Julia was taken by surprise, but she knew the characteristic bluntness of her companion's manners and speech, and Julia was rarely disconcerted: she possessed astonishing coolness of manners for a girl so young and so recently introduced: her reply was prompt, and quietly delivered.

"I know no right you possess to ask me such a question, Mr. Pynsent."

"I have a right, Miss Julia. If I like a girl, I am at liberty to ask if she is pre-engaged."

Julia laughed, and her laugh led Tom Pynsent to form a wrong conjecture upon the state of her feelings towards himself. He pressed her hand with considerable force, which Julia resented by withdrawing her arm.

"Pray don't be angry, my dear Miss Julia, at a good fox-hunting squeeze: I am not used to press ladies' hands, but the firmer I shake a friend's hand, the stronger is my pleasure at receiving him, and, if my grasp offends you, set it down to my affection."

Julia made no reply, but she retreated to her party; Lady Wetheral was impatient at her return, but Julia's indignation heeded not the hopes and fears which struggled in her mother's bosom; she was offended at Tom Pynsent's misconstruction of her laugh, and she stationed herself by the side of her sister. Tom Pynsent stood bewildered. The colour rose in Lady Wetheral's cheeks with alarm.

"My dear Julia, you have quitted Mr. Pynsent in a very extraordinary manner; I am really hurt; Mr. Pynsent! my dear Mr. Pynsent!"

Tom Pynsent advanced, but his mind was in a labyrinth of confused astonishment:—"Bless my soul, Lady Wetheral, I suppose I have done something wrong; but the deuce take me if I know what brought all this about!"

"Some little misunderstanding, my dear Mr. Pynsent; little misunderstandings, we are told, often lead to agreeable and sincere friendships; dine with us to-morrow, and make up this little fracas."

Tom Pynsent bowed, with a look indicative of pleased stupidity.

"I shall be very happy; I am in the wrong box, somehow; but I can't, for the soul of me, think why Miss Julia ran away from me."

There was a silence of some moments; Tom Pynsent could not catch Julia's eye to learn whether its glance was of good or evil, therefore, he sought consolation in addressing Anna Maria.

"Miss Wetheral, *you* are not offended; perhaps *you* will condescend to accept my arm?"

Poor Anna Maria mechanically obeyed

the request, and Julia again took possession of her partner. The exchange was made in silence, and apparently to the great satisfaction of Lord Ennismore. Tom Pynsent walked forward with Anna Maria, and made his remark upon Julia's desertion.

"Upon my word, Miss Wetheral, I did nothing to give your sister offence, except squeezing her hand, which no lady takes offence at, particularly when a man is making love. I love her better than any woman I know, and I would not do any thing improper for the world; but a squeeze of the hand, now, Miss Wetheral, was *that* a thing to quarrel about?"

A cold unearthly smile was Anna Maria's answer to this appeal.

"I shall have it all out to-morrow, however. I suppose Miss Julia means to have me, as she laughed when I spoke seriously. She does not like that fellow Ennismore, does she, Miss Wetheral?"

"I cannot tell," answered Anna Maria, in a voice so low it was scarcely audible.

"I wish I knew! Miss Julia laughed

when I put the question to herself, which, I suppose, is encouragement, but I shall see to-morrow. I shall speak in time, for fear she should take a fancy to that lanky dog behind us. But who would suppose any woman so shy at a squeeze? If I had kissed her, it might have been another thing! Bless my soul, what odd things women are!"

There was no time for further remark on either side; the carriage was ready, and no pause allowed a continuation of complaint. Tom Pynsent assisted Julia to ascend the steps of the barouche, but she would not address him, or grant him one look to enable him to discover the real state of her feelings. Lady Wetheral bent forward as the door was closing.

"We shall expect you very early to-morrow, my dear Mr. Pynsent, and pray do not treat us as common acquaintance: Sir John was wishing for you yesterday."

"I shall come very early — perhaps to luncheon," replied Tom Pynsent, resting his broad hand on the carriage-door, and fixing his eyes upon Julia, "I have something particular to say to Sir John."

"Oh! delightful!" cried Lady Wetheral, bowing and smiling; "this will be something enlivening to tell Sir John. Something, of course, about hunting or shooting, the idol of men's hearts."

"It's not about hunting or shooting this time, Lady Wetheral."

"Ah! you mean to be mysterious, to raise our curiosity—what can it be? We must be calm, however, and try to wait patiently till to-morrow, or rather till this afternoon, for I fancy it is half-past twelve."

Tom Pynsent bowed, and the party proceeded homewards, enclosing four hearts, labouring under conflicting and powerful feelings. Lady Wetheral's happy, uncontrollable emotions were in strange contrast with Anna Maria's deeply-pained feelings, which lay concealed under impenetrable silence. Julia also was silent and sad; her situation with respect to Tom Pynsent and Lord Ennismore gave her young heart its first painful impressions. Lord Ennismore replied to Lady Wetheral's eager, agitated remarks with an absence of mind which proved his lordship

equally occupied with his feelings; and all this was originated in the well-filled, gay ball-room, which had long been considered the cradle of happiness and the grave of care. So prone is nature to seek suffering under the mask of pleasure, that all hearts court its renewal.

Lady Spottiswoode's parties were the scene of cruel disappointment, and the cause of repeated disquietude, yet did the young and fair of that day crowd to her assemblies, and severe illness alone obliged a reluctant invalid to remain perdue, when Lady Spottiswoode issued her cards from the Abbey foregate.

> ———Oh! that deceit should dwell
> In such a gorgeous palace.

Anna Maria had borne her short but destroying colloquy with Tom Pynsent without giving way to the pain which wrung her heart; and, during the drive to Wetheral, she had restrained the swelling of her soul, and made a strong effort to subdue the tears which rushed into her eyes; but when she had gained the sanctuary of her own apartment,

all restraint was at an end, and Julia bent over the unfortunate girl as she lay extended hopelessly and helplessly upon her bed.

"My dear sister, is this horrible grief indeed given to Tom Pynsent?"

"God knows it is! Julia, but do not ridicule a sorrow you cannot comprehend. When I heard him this night declare his love for you, and when he whispered it to my own self, then I felt as all women feel who find their affection is unheeded and unvalued. I felt, Julia, as keenly as if Tom Pynsent had been admired and loved by hundreds."

"But, my dear Anna, you will not love a man who places so little value—and is so very —" Julia hesitated.

"It matters little," replied Anna Maria, with impetuosity, "who cares for Tom Pynsent, or who expresses astonishment at my attachment. Every woman wonders at her neighbour's choice, and it is sufficient that I am most unhappy. You, Julia, need not tell me I am little valued by him; I know and feel it, but the information does not come well from your lips, who have gained the heart I can never cease to covet."

"Tom Pynsent can never be any thing to me," said Julia.

"And thus it is," continued Anna Maria, speaking in mournful accents. "We are doomed to helpless misery from our birth, and we prey upon each other's peace. Why did he constantly attend upon me, when his heart was free? and why did my mother teach my first thoughts to rest upon a man whose affections she could not ensure me? I tell you, it was wrong!—I tell you, Julia, it was altogether ungenerous and cruel. I have been sacrificed to a selfish policy; and on the very threshold of life my happiness has been wrecked, to make existence a burthen for ever!" She clasped her hands tightly together, and, rising suddenly from her bed, paced her room with rapid steps, talking apparently to herself.

"What was to be gained by my misery? has it soothed my mother's ambition? She spurns me as the object who has disappointed her hopes. Has it gained the long-sought aim of my own anxious love? He told me himself he loved my sister. Am I to bear

all this with smiling indifference? Julia, Julia!" she screamed, "I cannot smile, I will not smile, and no one shall see me smile more."

Julia endeavoured to soothe Anna Maria into calmness, but all efforts were unavailing; her impetuous nature was roused, and it must take its own course: resistance could only increase its fury.

"Leave me to myself, Julia — leave me. I shall be calm enough to-morrow, but now my very heart bursts at the thought of all that has passed. Do not try to calm me! I will not be calm. If I grow calm, it will be from madness, and I shall be maddened by opposition. I tell you, Julia, to leave me, and don't let Thompson come into my room. There, go, in mercy."

Julia became alarmed, but she turned to withdraw.

"Shake hands, Anna Maria, and wish me good night."

"I have no heart for any thing," replied Anna Maria, irritated. "I will not shake hands, or wish good to any one, for it is all nonsense; only leave me now."

Julia retired in silence, for it was vain to persevere in calming her sister's irritated feelings. Anna Maria's nature was composed of fiery particles; and her very composed, general manner concealed a heart full of keen and powerful emotions. It was the intensity of these emotions which required the greatest watchfulness in subduing external appearance of inward suffering: and to the public eye Anna Maria appeared gentle and calm to insensibility. Perhaps only Julia was aware of the real state of her heart; for who could discover a powerful attachment under such cold and calm exterior?

Had Lady Wetheral sacrificed her anxiety for establishment to the domestic happiness of her family, all this misery had been spared; neither perhaps had Isabella been given to a man five-and-thirty years her senior. But at Wetheral Castle all parental feeling was engrossed in calculating possibilities and probabilities of high alliances, on Lady Wetheral's part; and Sir John had too long sacrificed his better judgment to his lady's whims, to recover again the tone of his authority. Since

then the ties of affection were so loosely bound together, and youthful hearts were taught to bend their nobler natures to the selfish dictates of ambition, what hope was there of bright and joyous hours, free to sport in innocence? What hope was there of that lovely confidence and peace which gilds the first years of the young, when parental care — a mother's care—guards the heart from sorrow, and leads it to love all that is good, and to pray against the evil passions? What hope is there for natures tutored into worldly sacrifices, ambitious only of the world's respect? Alas! none.

CHAPTER IV.

Tom Pynsent was serious when he engaged to make an early appearance. He arrived earlier at Wetheral than even Lady Wetheral could expect him, and her smiles were proportionably bland and expressive. Tom Pynsent would have detected and laughed at the affectionate reception which awaited him, had his heart been free to seek amusement in the hopes and fears of Lady Wetheral; but the scene was changed. The parent, anxious for a daughter's establishment, was, in Tom Pynsent's eyes, his prop and stay against the forthcoming proposal; and Lady Wetheral, the "well-known manœuvrer," was at this time only Julia's mother and his kind well-wisher. In short, Tom Pynsent was caught;

and, like other keen-sighted men of fortune, he was perfectly upon his guard, when no danger threatened his heart; but every firm resolution melted, when his eye was pleased, and his fancy gratified.

He was now on the eve of proposing to Julia Wetheral, in spite of his determination never to bow the knee to a Wetheral, or to be "hooked" by her ladyship's gracious compliments. Poor Tom Pynsent! he fell honourably at the very head of his thousand determinations never to visit Wetheral Castle but as an amusement, and never to flirt with a daughter of that house but as a means of raising false hopes in the lady mother's anxious bosom.

"Men's faiths are wafer-cakes."

Lady Wetheral affected to be entirely ignorant of the cause of Tom Pynsent's early visit.

"Mr. Pynsent so very early in the field! it must indeed be a hunting appointment. Sir John will be delighted;" and she held out her hand, smiling a million agreeable wel-

comes. "Where are my daughters? they did not expect you so soon, I dare say. Lord Ennismore has escorted them walking, probably."

Tom Pynsent was disappointed at Julia's absence, but he only looked bewildered.

"I wish to see Sir John as soon as possible, Lady Wetheral; I came early on purpose to see him; perhaps I may find him in his study; shall I proceed there?"

"By all means, my dear Mr. Pynsent, unless you allow me to summon Sir John to us. Am I *de trop?*"

"Oh! no, not *that*," answered Tom Pynsent, becoming somewhat disordered; "you will hear it in time, so you may as well be present, only—"

"Let me lead the way then, my dear Mr. Pynsent;" and she proceeded towards the door of the study. Sir John was seated in his arm-chair, looking over a package of new books; and, for a minute or two, he did not recognize Mr. Pynsent. Lady Wetheral was shocked.

"Sir John, you do not appear to remember

our friend Mr. Pynsent, who is anxious to see you. What is the study, my love, which so engrosses your faculties?"

Sir John rose, and received Tom Pynsent with his usual quiet politeness.

"I did not immediately recollect you, sir; I hope your family are well, Mr. Pynsent; be seated, if you please."

Tom Pynsent glanced at the chair which was advanced towards him, but he remained standing with a red face and an embarrassed manner.

"I hope all are well at Hatton," repeated Sir John, surprised by the silence of his companion.

Tom Pynsent could only comfortably entertain one idea at a time, and his present idea was exclusively the proposal he intended to make for Julia. The repetition, however, roused him from his embarrassment.

"Sir John, I'm come here for a very particular purpose." The plunge was made, and Tom Pynsent's voice and manner recovered their serenity. "I have something to say, Sir John, which I hope will not give offence.

I like Miss Julia very much; indeed I love and admire her extremely, and I wish to know if I have your leave to address her?"

Lady Wetheral threw looks and smiles at the speaker, which encouraged and delighted the lover; but Sir John was taken by surprise.

"Sir, you are — I am, I confess, a very little surprised. You say my daughter *Julia*, sir."

"I wish for your consent, Sir John, to address Miss Julia. I have spoken to her, and she did not altogether refuse me, as she laughed very much; but I think it right to speak to you upon the subject, that all things may be above-board."

"You are acting honourably and properly, Mr. Pynsent," returned Sir John, holding out his hand, which was seized by the warm-hearted Tom. He continued, "My daughter, Mr. Pynsent, must decide for herself, but, if she finds no reason to decline your proposal, I am quite ready to welcome you as my son-in-law."

Lady Wetheral went greater lengths in

speech than her husband, for her joy was uncontrollable.

"My dear Tom—for now I address you as my future son—my happiness will be perfect, should I ever visit you and my dear Julia at Hatton. It gives me unfeigned pleasure to think Julia has fixed her affections upon an object so truly worthy, and so acceptable to her own family. This is indeed to me a very happy moment."

"I will do every thing you wish in the settlement way, Sir John," said the honest-hearted suitor, his face almost purple with gratified feelings. "My father says he will relinquish Hatton to me directly; but I don't mean the governor to quit his own favourite place. Let him keep it for life, you know, for we young ones can move about. He will allow me to make a very handsome settlement upon my wife — any thing you suggest, Sir John."

Sir John was pleased by the open-hearted manner and matter, and his heart warmed to Tom Pynsent.

"Sir, I wish you well with my daughter,

and, if you succeed, we shall easily arrange the necessary form. You have my best wishes, for I like your sentiments, and your father, sir, may be proud of your heart. A good son is a sure promise of an indulgent husband, and I quite approve of your declining to allow your father to quit Hatton, Mr. Pynsent."

"Why, Sir John, there is but a right and wrong way of doing things—if a man does right, he goes on very well; and if he does wrong, why, he will be damned for it!"

The voices of Julia and Lord Ennismore, in playful tones, echoing through the hall, at this moment reached Tom Pynsent's ears. He became alarmed and nervous.

"I wish it was over, Sir John. I could wish to see Miss Julia now, and hear my fate at once. A man gets very awkward and nervous in this situation, I declare!" and Tom Pynsent's red face became ashy pale.

Lady Wetheral undertook to make his burthen an easy one. She even ventured to answer for Julia's affection — this was going too far. Julia had never confided her feel-

ings to her mother upon any subject, and Lady Wetheral's anxiety to secure Tom Pynsent led her into the commission of much injustice. She had sacrificed Anna Maria's peace by thoughtless manœuvring, and now she was creating false hopes in the heart of Tom Pynsent. His situation at this moment was pitiable, and Sir John at once decided upon the necessity of an immediate conference with Julia. Poor Julia obeyed the summons conveyed through Thompson, and appeared in the study brilliant in smiles, and glowing with her recent exercise. She was not surprised at seeing Tom Pynsent, though she did not expect him so early. Julia was never off her guard. No girl in existence possessed her perfect command of feelings, and her self-possessed manner which never deserted her under any circumstance. She was quite prepared for a scene with Tom Pynsent and her mother.

"My dear Julia," said her father, taking her hand, and seating her between Tom Pynsent and himself, "Mr. Pynsent has been here some little time, and he has been speak-

ing on a subject which you alone can dispose of."

"Oh, papa, I will dispose of it in one word," replied Julia, in her gayest manner. "What is it about?"

Tom Pynsent took up the matter as appertaining to himself, exclusively.

"Miss Julia, I have spoken to Sir John upon the subject of last night."

"Well, Mr. Pynsent."

"And, Sir John gives his consent, Miss Julia, if——."

"But I do not give mine, Mr. Pynsent."

Lady Wetheral sat rooted upon her chair; the fountain of her speech was dried up. Tom Pynsent coloured.

"You laughed at my remarks, Miss Julia, at the time, and that was not discouraging, I thought."

"There is no sentiment in a laugh, Mr. Pynsent, but I am sorry you misunderstood my manner. Excuse me, but I never can like you in any light but that of a pleasant acquaintance, and I hope you will not renew the subject. I laughed at your odd way of

broaching your subject last night, but I am sure I could not encourage you, for I left you, if you remember."

"You were very abrupt with me, Miss Julia, but I fancied you were only angry because I squeezed your hand."

Tom Pynsent turned scarlet as he spoke.

"Well, Mr. Pynsent, don't let us say another word on the subject, and pray don't worry me with complaints, for I am speaking my unchangeable sentiments when I say, any expostulation on your part will only make me dislike you; and I really like you very much as only Tom Pynsent, our pleasant neighbour."

"Why, there's only a right and wrong way of doing things," replied Tom Pynsent, rising; "and I have no idea of teazing a woman as if I was digging out a fox, to make her dread the sound of my voice. I wish you well, Miss Julia, and as you will never hear me complain of a woman who tells me plump she does not like me, you need not be afraid of meeting me sometimes. I like every body to be above-board, and say what they mean. I am very sorry to appear rude,

Sir John, but you will excuse my taking leave. I came upon a business which is settled, you know, so I had better take myself off."

Tom Pynsent bowed, and turned towards Lady Wetheral, whose lips were white and compressed.

"I must not take a lady's word for her daughter in future, but you did all you could to give me hope, for which I am obliged to you, Lady Wetheral. Good morning to you."

He passed Julia in silence, but she held out her hand.

"Say we are friends, Mr. Pynsent."

This little circumstance apparently overpowered poor Tom Pynsent, for he made no reply. He held the offered hand to his lips for some time, and, relinquishing it gently, he quitted the room like a man who had suffered disappointment, but who was prepared to bear his trial without flinching. Even Julia fel admiration at her lover's manly exit.

Lady Wetheral was some minutes before she spoke, though her lips had moved without

the power of conveying sounds. She was stupified at the conversation which had taken place before her, and Tom Pynsent was gone without her having the ability of tongue or hand to detain him! Julia had unequivocally refused Tom Pynsent, Hatton, and a settlement! These things were too powerful to bear. At length she gained her voice, but it came hollow and slowly from her parched lips.

"Julia!"

"Well, mamma, what have you to say to me? Do not you think I made a quick affair of my proposal?"

"Do you know what you have done?" said her mother, in the same dreadful tone.

"To be sure, mamma, I do. I have refused great, broad-faced, but honest Tom Pynsent; but now I have something to tell *you*."

Lady Wetheral waved her hand.

"Do not speak to me, Julia; and never let my eyes behold you. I cannot help being your mother, but you are no longer my daughter in feeling, and I command you to remain in your own apartments for ever.

You have given me the bitterest sorrow a mother can experience."

Sir John quitted the room.

"You have brought me in sorrow to the grave, for I shall never outlive this disgrace!"

"Oh yes, you will, mamma: you must live to dance at my wedding."

"I detest the sound!" she exclaimed—"your wedding! You have refused the first match in the two counties, and you will be disgraced and dishonoured among the wise, while I am pitied and despised by all my friends! Send Thompson to me."

Her ladyship became hysterical, and Julia became serious.

"I tell you, mamma, you will live to dance at my wedding, if you could only keep off those hysterics. Would you have me accept two men at once? How can I take poor Tom Pynsent when I am engaged to another!"

"Engaged to another, without asking my advice! Send instantly for Thompson: I am very ill." Her ladyship rang the bell violently. "You have killed me, and disgraced my repu-

tation, Julia, — you have trifled with my kindness and affection—you have killed your mother!"

The servant appeared, and Julia summoned the redoubted Thompson, who hurried to the scene of action. She beheld her lady in her usual state of agitation, when any thing disagreeable occurred. Julia was seated calmly by her side.

Thompson applied her usual remedies, and entreated to hear what had distressed her lady's nerves. Every family affair was confided to the lady's-maid.

"Your mistress, Thompson, is discomposed at the idea of my engagement to Lord Ennismore," replied Julia. "You know mamma has fits now, upon every fresh occurrence."

Julia's words fell upon her mother's heart like the

> "Sweet south upon a bank of violets,
> Stealing and giving odour."

She raised her head, and held out her hand to Julia.

"My dear child, you have given me excessive pain most uselessly. Thompson, I am better; you always stifle me with those salts;

take them away. Your obstinacy in refusing Mr. Pynsent and Hatton almost broke my heart. How could I be aware that you had secured Lord Ennismore, Julia? I never saw the least attention on his part, and I had arranged he was to propose hereafter to Clara. Well, I am much relieved. I really fancied you engaged to some horrid creature, like Leslie."

"If you had listened to me, mamma, when I told you I had something to say, all this would have been spared."

"My dear, how can people listen when they are in terror? I saw you parading before me as the wife of some common creature, and all my friends laughing at me — what horrid visions!—but now you will be a peeress, with the glory of having refused the first commoner in the county! My dear Julia, you have done extremely well; I am sorry Anna Maria has effected nothing; but I never saw Lord Ennismore offer you any attention—how did it all come about?"

"You are the only blind person, then, mamma, for Lord Ennismore has been publicly

attentive ever since he came to Wetheral. You must have noticed his manner last night."

"No, my dear, that was Tom Pynsent."

"Nonsense, mamma, it was Lord Ennismore. Every body saw his attentions; so would you, if you had not been running your head against Tom Pynsent. Lord Ennismore has written this morning to his mother to join him. He hopes she will be with us in a very few days. I told him not to say a word to papa yet, because I knew he objected to Lord Ennismore's health, but we shall soon nurse him into good care."

"To be sure, my love!" responded her mother, "Lord Ennismore will find himself a very different person when he is settled into married life, with a wife to watch over him. Tom Pynsent is an excellent creature, but, as you say, he *is* broad set, and red-faced. Too much health is worse than too little, in my opinion; Sir John will see things in a different light, when he knows of the actual proposal."

"He must be made acquainted with my

engagement, sooner or later," observed Julia, musing; "I wish the whole business was over."

"Let *me* open the business to your father, my love, and I shall be surprised if he is not extremely pleased at your good fortune. We will say nothing about it to-day, but to-morrow I will answer for his acquiescence. Lady Ennismore will find every thing arranged when she arrives, and I flatter myself you will be in Staffordshire this day six months. I shall be very proud of my daughter Ennismore!"

Julia assented to her mother's proposition, and nothing was made public till the following morning, when her ladyship found herself alone with her husband, in his study. Sir John opened the conversation, by lecturing his lady upon her sentiments.

"I am called upon, Gertrude, to object to many things which take place at Wetheral, but I was particularly hurt at your observations to Julia yesterday. Had my daughter been condemned by the laws of her country for crimes offensive to humanity, you could

not have expressed yourself in stronger terms than the reproaches you levelled at Julia for declining a man who was disagreeable to her."

"Now, love, that is past and gone. I was very angry with her, and should continue to be so, had I not found her refusal of Pynsent proceeded from an excellent cause, which I am going to explain. You know it is very wrong to accept one man, when you are engaged to another. That is a rule with all proper people."

"Julia has accepted some gentleman, then, Gertrude."

"Ah, how differently you and I feel under such a knowledge! A mother feels so keenly! I was obliged to send for Thompson, when I heard Julia plead an engagement. I was sure it was Leslie, or some such creature, and I was in hysterics, while you have not even changed countenance in your suspense. My love, Julia is engaged to Ennismore, if you do not object, which I am sure you will not think of doing. I congratulate you, my dear, on acquiring a peer for your son-in-law."

"And Julia refused Pynsent for Ennismore?"

"To be sure she did, most wisely."

"Then," he exclaimed, "she has done that which she will repent to her dying day; and you, Gertrude, must be responsible for her misery."

"Good heavens, how you have thrown down all my plans, Sir John, and how you embitter my happy moments! I cannot imagine why you like to terrify me in this way!"

Lady Wetheral trembled, which was ever a prelude to hysterics, but her husband's temper was now tried "to the top of its bent," and he heeded not the increasing symptoms.

"Lord Ennismore has been duped into making Julia an offer."

"I meant him for Clara, love, not Julia," cried his lady, hoping to ward off his reproach.

"And you have given one of your daughters, Gertrude, to a creature diseased in body and mind."

"What does that signify, my love? Julia will not think of his looks a month after her

marriage, and she will be a peeress, with an immense estate."

"You are marrying her to an idiot of quality."

"Fiddlededee, Sir John, he enters a room as well as other people. Who makes a fuss about intellects, if a man of large fortune proposes to their daughter? I should die with shame if you advanced such musty notions before company. Besides, you asked Lord Ennismore to Wetheral yourself."

"I did so," replied Sir John, "I did so; but I believed my daughters must be safe in their affections. I could not suppose Lord Ennismore would attract a woman's love; and I will not believe Julia cares for him. You have tutored her, Gertrude, to barter her soul for a coronet, and your system has corrupted her heart and feelings."

He paced the room in unusual agitation of manner. Lady Wetheral perceived the tide of her powerful influence over her husband's mind was fast ebbing, and a *coup de main* was the last resource of her inventive genius. She became indignant.

"It is well, Sir John, my children have possessed a mother devoted to their interest, since you have ever been indifferent to their well-doing. Had I sat supinely in my room, as you have done in your study, my daughters had passed the prime of their days in insignificance; or, if one had changed the scene, it might have been her happy lot, perhaps, to move into dirty barracks with young Leslie, whom you persist in receiving at Wetheral, in spite of my remonstrances."

"Leslie would not choose a wife from your group, my love. His idea of matrimonial comforts does not jump with your own."

"Don't make me ill, Sir John, with any allusion to that young man; or imagine for a moment we could 'jump' in any sentiment together. Had I sat supinely looking on, as you have done, Isabel would never have married a wealthy commoner, or Julia become a peeress, with the glory of refusing Tom Pynsent."

"Julia has done wrong in declining him for Ennismore; she has given up an honest fellow,

for a poor, ill-nursed, unhealthy creature, with a mind as weak as his body."

"I never can talk with you, Sir John, upon this kind of subject, your notions are so extremely contracted, and you are so blind to advantages."

"What advantages, Gertrude, in Ennismore?"

"Oh, my love, unspeakable advantages. He is a man of rank and large fortune, two very considerable advantages, and, if his health is not very good, it may improve; and, as to his mind, he may not be extremely learned—few men are, who are not destined for professions. He may not be particularly good-tempered, but ——," Lady Wetheral became somewhat confused in her palliatives, by her husband suddenly stopping short in his perambulation, and, fixing his eyes upon her, "every body has something to balance their virtues."

"What virtues does Ennismore possess, Gertrude?"

"I'm sure I don't know; I wish you would not annoy me with such out of the way ques-

tions. Lord Ennismore shows good taste in addressing Julia, and I dare say she will improve many of his foibles. Lady Ennismore will be here next week, and I hope every thing will be arranged in a few weeks, for you could not be so reckless as to withhold your consent—could you now, my love!"

"I will see Julia alone," replied Sir John

"By all means, but do not invent objections for her, and do not distress her with your long lectures, my dear love, for my sake I see poor Julia is very much attached."

"Nonsense! attached to such a man in fortnight's acquaintance—for shame!"

"Julia is *decidedly* attached to Ennismore, Sir John, quite as much attached as a woman ought to be. I think it highly indelicate in a young girl to run after a man, and disgust him with fondness; those things are not done. She is attached very properly, and I beg you will not persuade her to the contrary."

"I shall see, Gertrude."

"You never saw in your life, my love; I never could persuade you to see any thing in a proper light."

"I saw through Boscawen, Gertrude, when you were blind."

"Nonsense! who cared to see through old Boscawen! I never thought about Isabel, therefore, her admirers could not interest me. I was sure she would only attract odd people, and you see I was correct."

CHAPTER V.

Sir John Wetheral's conference with Julia was of long duration, for he found her prepared with a hundred arguments, which bore down every objection: it was Samson stoning the Philistine, and every blow told upon her antagonist. It was in vain he urged Julia to pause ere she committed herself, and became the wife of a sickly husband.

"My child, consider your own health, and the health of the unborn: beware of undertaking the situation of nurse at your age, and subjecting yourself to the irritable chidings of a man weighed down with disease, and prostrated in mind by its effects."

"My dear papa, that is one material reason for my acceptance; I am very much interested in poor Lord Ennismore's sufferings, and you

would not wish me to desert an unfortunate man because Providence has afflicted him."

"You cannot be aware of its results, Julia."

"Oh! papa, I am perfectly aware of all consequences, and fully prepared to meet them. Lord Ennismore is ill — I will nurse him. He is irritable, I know, but I will bear with him."

"I will not press his health, Julia, as the most objectionable point; there are still more powerful ones. I consider Lord Ennismore's intellect enfeebled by disease, and his temper affected too strongly for your happiness."

"I do not consider his intellects below par, papa: Tom Pynsent is ten times louder, and less agreeable than Lord Ennismore: there must be some disagreeables in every body."

"Lord Ennismore's mind is not a gentlemanly mind, Julia; I have observed his actions and sentiments. He is exclusively selfish: a selfish man can never be an agreeable companion for a young wife."

"Time will improve him in that respect, papa. I do not see how Lord Ennismore's selfish feelings can interfere with me; his fortune will command any wishes he may form; I shall not oppose them. As to his temper, I shall neither

see nor hear its display; he must be selfish and violent with his servants."

"And are these the notions you seriously entertain with respect to matrimony, Julia?"

"My notions, papa, are really serious, and I know I shall find them serviceable. I have quite made up my mind to marry Lord Ennismore, and say now, papa, you do not object. Mamma says you will not and cannot object to a match so splendid; now, papa, say yes, and don't fidget about ill-health and temper."

Julia took her father's hand, and kissed it with a gaiety altogether astonishing. Sir John smiled at the action, and involuntarily drew her towards him. Julia took advantage of the movement.

"That's my dear, good papa, I knew you meant to give me pleasure: silence is more expressive than words, and I am Lady Ennismore in prospect, am I not?"

"I offer you counsel, my dear girl," replied her father, gently and gravely, "I can do no more; the world may suppose you high and happy, but, mark me, Julia, you will be the veriest wretch on earth if you marry Ennismore, and, at that moment, my advice will be useless, and my presence impossible — a husband com-

mands you, and supersedes your father. Listen to me, Julia: Ennismore is governed by his imperious and overbearing mother, whose wishes are masked by apparent mildness and great fascination of manner."

"A mother's influence must give way to that of a wife," exclaimed Julia, earnestly.

"Lady Ennismore's influence will give way to no one, and you must succumb to its power if you hope for peace. Her stronghold is the very selfishness she has fostered in her son: all his intentions, every word and action of his, have reference to his mother, who has so long ministered to his besetting sin."

"I flatter myself I shall be able to compete with my husband's mother," said Julia, in a tone slightly tinged with contempt. "I should consider myself strangely altered, if my husband turned from me, to consult his mother. No, papa, I have no fear of that insult — Ennismore has too much affection for me."

"Ennismore is not capable of affection, Julia."

"Well, papa, you are saying the most unkind things possible of Lord Ennismore, and, indeed, excuse me if I say you are quite wrong in ac-

cusing him of want of affection." A burst of tears followed poor Julia's hurried speech.

Sir John again repeated his strong objections to the match, and endeavoured to point out the fallacy of attempting to win Lord Ennismore's confidence—the confidence of a man whose mind nearly approached to imbecility, but who was linked to his mother by the strong force of long habit; and her control over his actions, fixed by constant and unceasing attention to his selfish wants.

In vain he placed before his daughter's mind the misery she must endure when the veil should be torn from her eyes, and she woke to the certainty of being united for life to a man she despised—a man inferior to herself in head and heart, yet possessing neither respect nor affection for the woman he had married. In vain he painted her longing for the home she had quitted, when all its pleasures, its tranquillity, would be of no avail; when she could never more claim or enjoy them—all was in vain! Julia could not, would not, admit a doubt of her power over Ennismore's heart, and she disclaimed all observations relative to the weakness of his capacity.

"It was easy enough," she said, "to fix inca-

pacity upon a young man whom Providence had afflicted with illness, but the proof was insufficient. She would rather say Providence had raised her up to watch over Lord Ennismore, and smooth the rough path he was destined to tread: certainly every disagreeable remark that could be devised was brought up in array before her, yet she could not feel alarmed: she was prepared to meet the trials which her mamma told her belonged to matrimony, especially where poverty presided: poverty would not be the case in this instance, and she must be allowed to say she could not resign Lord Ennismore upon what had been alleged against him. If her papa positively forbade the match, she would submit, but nothing short of his decided prohibition would induce her to renounce a man she liked and approved.

"I would rather follow you to the grave, Julia, than see you the wife of Ennismore!" exclaimed her father.

"The grave, then, papa, will be my portion, if you are determined to be unkind to poor Lord Ennismore, whom you invited yourself to Wetheral."

The father was moved: true, his own hand had penned the invitation, and it availed nothing that

such a step had been taken against his own better judgment. He had brought the evil to his own door, and the consequence was falling upon him even now. Julia perceived her advantage, and again, in gentle entreaty, besought his consent to her marriage. Self-accusation softened her father's heart, as he viewed Julia pleading for a destiny his own error had prepared, and she wrung from his lips a slow and reluctant assent.

"You have forced me, Julia, to say words which will seal both our misery," he said, as Julia clung fondly round him, "and you will one day upbraid me for my weakness."

"Never, dear papa, never! you cannot know Lord Ennismore as I know him; and, in days to come, you will smile at the list of grievances you brought against that poor, suffering, innocent creature."

"I have done that which I shall repent of for ever, Julia; but I yet tell you my judgment has yielded to affection. I warn you to pause ere you marry a man your father disapproves—before you commit your peace of mind into the hands of a selfish-hearted husband—before you quit for ever the home which shelters you! You have drawn from me an unwilling consent, be-

cause I cannot give pain—because I have myself drawn this blank, for I allowed the intimacy; but, Julia, I have said, and I say again, I do not like the man."

"You have said every thing, papa, to dissuade me, and upon me be the misery you suggest, and which I cannot believe will arise from my marriage with Lord Ennismore. Think no more of me, papa, and do not reproach yourself for having made me happy. A few months will prove the mistake of your statements, and you will rejoice in having given me to Ennismore: indeed, papa, you will!" and Julia stroked his hand with a smile so bright, and eyes sparkling with such deep happiness, that her father could only feel it impossible to check her dream of hope. Lady Wetheral at that moment opened the door.

"What an eternity of time you have been closeted! I fancied something was wrong, and a mother's feelings are uncontrollable: ah, Julia, I see all is right by your bright eyes—I see '*trousseau*' written legibly on your forehead, and a splendid one it will prove, I am sure. Of course, Lady Ennismore must have family jewels, which she will present to you. I will resign mine with

pleasure, that my daughter Ennismore may appear in great brilliance."

"You have other daughters, Gertrude," said Sir John, gravely.

"But none, love, that are likely to marry peers. Anna Maria, I am sure, will not marry now: she has let every opportunity pass by. Clara is beautiful, but peers are not plentiful in our neighbourhood. Perhaps a season at Cheltenham —. But where is Lord Ennismore, Julia? Let me congratulate and receive my son: I always admired and thought well of dear Ennismore: indeed, I may consider it quite my own match, for you know, Julia, I always said he must be my son-in-law!"

Lord Ennismore was sought by Julia, and presented in form, to receive each parent's benediction: it was distinctly uttered by Sir John Wetheral, and formed a strong contrast to his lady's melodious and "holyday" terms. As Lord Ennismore advanced, his attenuated form, pallid countenance, and lack-lustre grey eyes, struck Sir John's mind with disgust and regret, which he could with difficulty repress.

"My lord, I am called upon, by my daughter Julia, to accept you as a near relation. I have

stated my sentiments to her freely; and as she allows no objections to take effect upon her own judgment, I have only to wish you happy in proportion to the kindness and indulgence you bestow upon your wife."

Lady Wetheral saluted his lordship as a man of many virtues. "My dearest lord, I cannot but felicitate myself and family upon our new and very dear accession to its number. If your health is preserved to us, we shall have no wish ungratified; and I trust my Julia will long enjoy the happiness which must arise from this grateful and flattering connexion."

Lord Ennismore bowed to each, but not one ray of expression lighted up his heavy countenance, or ruffled the leaden stillness of his *ensemble*. Julia's smiling face lent increased dullness to her lover's looks as he spoke.

"I am very proud to meet your approbation, Sir John, and yours, Lady Wetheral; I expect my mother in a few days, who will arrange things for me. She wished me very much to marry, and I am sure Julia will be very happy in her acquaintance."

"I am sure I shall love her, Ennismore, if it was only for your sake," said Julia.

"She manages every thing for me," replied his lordship, "and I have nothing to do but amuse myself; I think she must be here on Wednesday, and then she will arrange all things for our marriage. I hope to receive you very soon at Bedinfield, Sir John, and you, Lady Wetheral; I shall have great pleasure in showing the lions there, and my mother will explain every thing to you."

"Oh! I look forward to that visit with such anxious pleasure, my dear lord!" replied Lady Wetheral. "I have heard so much of Bedinfield, so much of its magnificence, and so much more of the excellent taste displayed in its internal comforts! I shall, indeed, pay you and dear Julia a visit with pleasure, and I am sure with profit, for the elegances of Bedinfield will suggest many improvements for Wetheral."

Lord Ennismore bowed repeatedly during Lady Wetheral's eulogium, and once more, when the eulogium closed:—

"My mother has done much towards beautifying the family estate; and I am sure your approbation will give her gratification, Lady Wetheral; as also yours, Sir John."

Sir John bent forward, in token of polite no-

tice, but he remained silent; his lady had already poured forth a stream of compliment, sufficient for all the exigencies of the case. Lord Ennismore turned to Julia, and addressed her in his best and most prosy manner.

"I have happiness in thinking my mother will approve my choice; she has long proposed my marrying, and I am sure she will tell me I have done right. I will now despatch a letter to say I am accepted. I should not like the circumstance to transpire through any other means, and she will be then enabled to form her own plans for our future establishment. I am sure she will think I have done right."

Thus did Julia become engaged to Lord Ennismore, and thus did she give herself away to a man perfectly disgusting, had he been unsupported by station and wealth. Sir John did not allude to the affair after he had undergone the painful task of accepting him in the light of a son; but Lady Wetheral did not affect to conceal the triumph of her heart; it revelled in her expression, and lighted up her countenance with unusual brilliance. Julia must be a peeress — the young and lovely Lady Ennismore! — had she now a wish ungratified?—all was absorbed in Julia.

Lady Ennismore's arrival broke through Lady Wetheral's day-dream, and demanded her attention; it was necessary for a time to generalize her feelings and thoughts; to withdraw them from resting exclusively on Julia, and to be again the polite and attractive hostess. The youthful peeress expectant had not attained her honours, and another personage was yet to be consulted and won. Lady Wetheral applied herself to her task with energy and tact.

Lady Ennismore had been many years a widow, and her person retained a considerable portion of beauty and youthful appearance. Her manner was irresistible to those whom she considered it her interest to attach; to all it was fascinating; but to the very few who were destined to be near her, and who became the involuntary agents of her will, to them Lady Ennismore's seductive attractions became a spell, which none could withstand, and from whose magnetic influence no talisman could free their spirit. Lord Ennismore's thoughts and sentiments had their rise in his mother's suggestions, though he believed his actions to be the offspring of his own free will; but her ascendency, silent and wily in its nature, was deeply and im-

moveably fixed in his mind—a wife might never hope to share it.

Lady Wetheral could not equal her guest in diplomatic talents, but she followed Lady Ennismore's lead with excellent tact, and managed her husband's distaste to her ladyship, with great skill. The ladies became intimate upon their first meeting, and were rarely separate during Lady Ennismore's stay at Wetheral. Julia was soon bound heart and soul to her future mother-in-law; her young imagination speedily allowed every virtue to manners so flattering, and she believed herself captivated by excellence, and the irresistible force of kindness as sincere as it was delightful. Every member at Wetheral, save its proprietor, adored the amiable and conciliating Lady Ennismore.

Lady Ennismore held an interesting conversation with her son, soon after her arrival at the castle. They were alone, in her ladyship's private sitting-room.

"My dear Ennismore, do you take your medicines regularly?"

"Yes, I take three pills every night."

"And your powders, my love?"

"Three times a day, just as I do at Bedinfield."

"Julia is a sweet girl, Ennismore; I hope she will not forget your health, or overlook the necessity of attending to your medicines."

"I am sure she will be very attentive," replied his lordship, laying down the book of patterns, which he was copying for Clara.

"I am sure she means it, Ennismore; but a fine young creature like Julia may forget occasionally, and it is so necessary your system should be attended to."

"Julia says she shall seldom leave Bedinfield; therefore, all things will go on as regularly as usual."

"My dear Ennismore, Julia must go into public as your wife; she must be often in society, and she must receive company; her station in life requires some sacrifices, but, should you often be compelled to remain alone, I should be very anxious about your health. I hate the venal attentions of servants; they might poison you."

"But you will be with us?" observed the young lord, in an anxious tone.

"My dear Ennismore, I would make any sacrifice to establish your comfort, but I dare say such a step is unnecessary. Julia is a dear, de-

lightful creature, just the very daughter-in-law I would have selected. I am sure her tenderest cares will be devoted to your health. If, in her gay or occupied hours, she should display an occasional oversight, remember her youth and beauty, and the difficulties of her situation, Ennismore."

"But who will attend to my medicines, and myself?" asked his lordship; "I never can be left alone, you know; who will play cribbage with me in the evenings, as you have always done?"

"Leave that to me, my son; time and circumstance will do much for us. You have chosen the flower of the Wetherals for your wife. Julia loves me, and is guided by me in every thing which relates to yourself; Lady W. is a lady-like goose, and her eldest daughter resembles the automaton in stillness and insipidity. Clara is very handsome, but I see already the germs of violence in her temper. You have done very wisely in choosing Julia; between ourselves, she is easily guided by the person she loves, and she loves me for your sake, Ennismore."

"I am very glad I have given you satisfaction; altogether, I am greatly pleased I am

going to be married, since you like Julia, and wished me to settle. I am sure she is an excellent person, and will take great care of me, but I can't think I shall get on well without *you*, mother!"

"My dear son, do you really wish to be plagued with a mother, when a young and handsome woman becomes your companion? Cannot you allow for a *little* present discomfort, till Julia becomes accustomed to your methods? Your poor fond mother will be a millstone round your neck, dear Augustus."

"I can never be happy without you, mother, to give me all my things in proper time. I have been so accustomed to have every thing done for me, and Julia cannot remember every thing at once, as you do. You will stay with us at Bedinfield?"

"Your affection to me is extremely flattering, Ennismore, and your mother will never be far from you; but consider the opinion of the world, and, believe me, we must conform in some measure to its expectations. I will retire to my jointure-house with proper humility; how long I continue there, will depend upon yourself."

"But Julia does not know my ways; who will give me my pills?"

"Your young wife, Ennismore."

"Mother, I can't marry, unless you will stay by me, and take care of me, as you have always done. Julia does not know I take so much medicine; she knows nothing about illness; I always expected you would live with me when I married."

"You will be very happy at Bedinfield, Augustus, with Julia."

"I know I shall be very ill, mother."

"Hush!" whispered her ladyship, as the door opened, and Julia appeared, fresh and fair as Venus, when she first presented her bright form before the admiring gods; the joyous expression of her face formed a painful contrast with the leaden torpidity of her lover's dreary countenance.

"I am come to announce another gay meeting at Lady Spottiswoode's this day week; all our party must, positively, attend, Lady Spottiswoode says, for her rooms are to boast particular attractions. The celebrated Adonis, Mr. Vyvyan, and the still more celebrated Captain Jekyl, are borrowed for the occasion. Here are notes for each, and all."

"And who is Mr. Vyvyan, Julia?" asked Lady Ennismore. "Every body knows, or has heard of Captain Jekyl, but I am ignorant of the existence of Mr. Vyvyan; comes he from Cornwall?"

"I do not know, but he is staying with the Pynsents, and every body is wild about him. You will obey the summons, dear Lady Ennismore?"

Her ladyship demurred.

"Oh, then, I shall have no pleasure in the thing at all," exclaimed Julia, "and I am sure Ennismore will not care about it if you are absent; therefore, we will remain together at home."

"Dear flattering girl," said her ladyship, smiling, and pressing Julia's hand; "am I so seriously included in your scheme of happiness? I will not hear of your absence from so much gaiety: now is the natural and proper period for enjoyment, Julia, and, since you are silly enough to prefer an old lady's society, I must and will with pleasure sacrifice my own wishes. I will attend you to Lady Spottiswoode's, and witness your triumphs."

"My greatest triumph will arise in having

won your consent to accompany us, dearest Lady Ennismore," replied Julia; and her beaming eyes proved the sincerity of her feelings. Julia, artless and affectionate, was incapable of disguise; and the parentally kind and watchful attention of her ladyship won the whole soul of the object to whom it was addressed. Julia rarely quitted the society of her future mother; and certainly her attachment amounted to adoration in its effects; but, little accustomed to expressions of regard and fondness from her own parent, and sensibly alive to kindness, no wonder the charm was felt, and its influence yielded to, by one so keenly feeling. The attachment of Lord Ennismore, however coldly manifested, and the fascinating sweetness of Lady Ennismore's manners, opened visions of happy futurity to Julia's mind; and she drank copiously of the cup of delightful hope presented to her lips. All was to her a scene of enchantment.

Christobelle was now admitted to range freely through the apartments once so impervious to her sisters, till their fourteenth anniversary allowed them the *entrée*, in form, to the delights of society. Upon Julia's engagement to Lord Ennismore, Clara was inducted into her rights and pri-

vileges; and Christobelle, under cover of her father's protection, was allowed to glide silently among the personages filling the present busy scene. Lady Wetheral was too much occupied in "arrangements" concerning the forthcoming marriage to heed her appearance; and if a kind remark from Lady Ennismore betrayed her presence, Lady Wetheral observed "it was only Bell, Sir John's pet, and concern, altogether—not hers;" and she was allowed to roam about unnoticed.

"Bell" remembered, in after years, how Julia was evermore seated near Lady Ennismore, fixing her eyes in admiration upon her ladyship's fine countenance, and listening to her conversation with eager attention. She remembered Lord Ennismore employed almost constantly by Clara in copying music, or drawing patterns for fancy-work, and Miss Wetheral occupied in drawing, with pale cheeks and humid eyes. She remembered distinctly her mother's gratified look and manner, as she passed from Lady Ennismore to her dull son, with the proud feeling that Julia would soon link her name with that of a baron of the united kingdom. Young as Christobelle then was, she could observe the

difference between Julia's happy, beaming eyes, and the melancholy expression of her eldest sister's countenance, pale as her own white dress, till an allusion to Hatton, or the name of Pynsent, suffused her cheek with a passing blush. She saw and observed much, which became a subject of meditation in after life.

Lady Ennismore demanded an audience of Sir John Wetheral, previous to Lady Spottiswoode's ball, and the interview took place in his study, with every appropriate ceremony and mystery. Lady Ennismore then, in behalf of her son, offered to arrange the settlements, and enter upon the little momentous prelude which usually preceded matrimonial vows. Sir John expressed his surprise that his lordship should require an interpreter and agent in a matter concerning his own affairs. Lady Ennismore was never wanting to herself.

"My dear Sir John, young people are shy of entering into affairs which involve much consideration. Perhaps I have laid the foundation of indolence in my son's mind by acting according to his wishes, instead of compelling him to become his own *homme d'affaires;* but my son's health must prove his excuse, and I shall be truly

happy to resign the reins into Julia's hand in a very few weeks."

"Your ladyship must have enervated his capacity for business, since my lord is unequal to make a settlement upon his wife," observed Sir John, drily.

Lady Ennismore appeared absorbed in calculation, as she ran up quickly a sum pencilled upon a slip of paper, which she held in her hand. The employment prevented her from comprehending the purport of the speech, or it allowed her ladyship a plea for momentary absence of mind. She turned suddenly from her calculation.

"My dear sir, Ennismore's income allows him to settle three thousand a year upon his lady."

Sir John bowed.

"Her jointure will be three thousand pounds," continued Lady Ennismore, "and five hundred pounds yearly pin-money: does that allowance appear too little, my dear Sir John?"

"It may not be too large an allowance for Lady Ennismore," he replied; "but it is a large sum for Julia Wetheral. I trust my daughter

will manage her affairs with prudence and credit to herself."

"I do not doubt her excellence in any point," said her ladyship, in winning tones. "Julia will be the pride of the family who are fortunate enough to receive her."

A father's tender feelings were touched; they were easily roused on the subject of his wife and children. He bowed to Lady Ennismore with more conciliation of manner than he had yet displayed towards her ladyship.

"I believe my daughter's heart to be excellent, and I am sure she will act uprightly in every situation."

"Ennismore and myself justly value our treasure, Sir John, and I shall retire from Bedinfield with the happy certainty of leaving my son in the possession of every earthly comfort. Young people should live to themselves, and I hold it good policy, on every account, to retire. Do you not think with me, Sir John?"

"I agree with your ladyship. I should not wish to be domesticated with young people upon their marriage. They are entering upon life as we have done before them; and the experience of old people is offensive to the unsuspicious.

They must win, through suffering, the knowledge we have acquired: *we* did so, Lady Ennismore."

"I flatter myself, Sir John, we think alike on many subjects. I shall retire to tranquillity and repose in my cottage of gentility, and the young people will make the walls of Bedinfield ring with festivity. I trust we may claim your daughter in a very short time. The settlements will not be long in my agent's hands, and Ennismore is so anxious to present his lady in Staffordshire! May I make interest to salute my real daughter in a month? I am now equally anxious to make my own arrangements; and my first wish must be to secure my son's comfort, before I allow myself to consider my own gratifications."

Sir John admitted that suspense was useless when both parties understood the nature of their engagements; and the marriage was fixed to take place as soon as the settlements should be ready for signature. There was great ceremony in presenting jewels; and Lady Wetheral was the head and front of every thing. There was immense preparation in the wardrobe department, far exceeding, in extent and expense, the ample and handsome dresses prepared for Mrs

Boscawen. Her ladyship explained the necessity of a very distinct line of demarkation in the wardrobe of the sisters.

"Julia marries a peer, consequently she will require a certain style of magnificence in her appearance. Isabel married a man of considerable wealth, but still the young wife of an elderly commoner is not of material importance in society. Isabel must nurse Boscawen, who is scarcely ever free from ague since he visited Holland, and these splendid silks would be useless, fading at Brierly; it would have been worse than folly to have given a peeress's *trousseau* to poor Isabel, but they will both attend your marriage, my dear Julia. It will be a proud day to us all, when you become the wife of Ennismore, a young nobleman possessing peculiar steadiness of character; and, though slightly delicate, his mind is elastic, and his love strongly developed towards you. Independently of his rank and title, I should prefer Ennismore to the young men of the present day. The necklace he presented to you so gallantly are diamonds of the first water."

"Lady Ennismore presented them to Julia, mamma," observed Clara, with simplicity.

"Fiddle faddle! they were presented in excellent taste. Isabel has no jewels, poor girl."

CHAPTER VI.

When the Wetheral party entered the crowded dancing-room at Lady Spottiswoode's, they caused considerable sensation. It was now publicly known that Lord Ennismore was the accepted lover of Miss Julia Wetheral, and the young couple were gazed at with untired wonder. Each countenance was well known to the company: Miss Julia Wetheral and young Lord Ennismore had frequented every fashionable place of rendezvous for the last three months, yet their engagement evidently procured each personage extraordinary power of novelty.

Eyes which had scarcely allowed a glance to the uninviting figure of Lord Ennismore, gazed now earnestly upon his person, because he came as the acknowledged lover of the handsome Julia Wetheral, and every gentleman glanced with

heightened interest and admiration at Julia, because she was no longer of their number to win and to receive their homage. Julia Wetheral now belonged to Lord Ennismore, and her brilliant light must soon disappear from their hemisphere: she was going to throw herself away, they affirmed, upon a fellow unworthy of such a prize. Could she really love such a poor, sickly creature? far better have taken Tom Pynsent.

Julia was the star of the evening, from the contending opinions which circulated upon the subject of her engagement. She was, however, innocent of the sensation she occasioned. Leaning on the arm of her affianced, and accompanied by Lady Ennismore, Julia passed through the groupes who watched her progress, and gave no thought to the whispered observations that floated around her. She was truly happy, truly blessed in her own bright mental anticipations, and in the company of those she loved. She heard no sounds but the heavy enunciation of Ennismore, and the sprightly musical tones of her ladyship. She saw no one distinctly, not even Tom Pynsent, who stood bolt upright before her party,

with a remarkably red face. He addressed Miss Wetheral.

"I am getting a disagreeable thing over, Miss Wetheral. I heard Miss Julia was engaged to that young sprig after all, and I knew I must meet her some time or other, so I am prepared to do it at once."

Julia at that moment caught his eye, and Tom Pynsent bowed with tolerable command of manner.

"There, that is over. I wish your sister had given herself to a better sort of fellow. That Lord Ennismore, Miss Wetheral, should not carry such a jewel away from us. She did right to refuse me, if I did not please her fancy, but she ought to have chosen a more likely upstanding fellow than the Staffordshire earl."

Anna Maria smiled complacently at the sound of Tom Pynsent's voice, but the subject was distressing. She could not trust herself to continue it. Tom Pynsent nodded and smiled to a group at some distance.

"There's Wycherly and Tyndal wishing me joy. They watched me bow to your sister. I'll just tell them they are d—d rascals for their pains."

Tom Pynsent walked away to put his threat in execution, but the congratulations of the gentlemen overpowered him.

"I say, Pynsent, you bowed like Sir Charles Grandison."

"Pynsent, that was mortal agony, wasn't it?"

"Tom's a cold," cried young Spottiswoode.

"You are all welcome to laugh, gentlemen," said Tom Pynsent, in his invariably good-natured manner. "Some of you are merry because you have not been refused by a woman you like, and half of you rejoice to find the mortification extended to another besides yourselves."

Mr. Wycherly turned towards Mr. Pynsent. "My dear fellow, you cause your own vexation by hunting after a woman who does not care for you. Most men run after shadows, and cast away substance. I married Mrs. Wycherly because she took a fancy to me, and let me see at once what she wished and expected. Faith, it saved me a great deal of trouble!"

"But no girl cares for me, unless she longs for my money," exclaimed Pynsent, feelingly.

"Zounds, man, don't be crestfallen. I know a fine woman at this moment, and in this room, who would take you penniless!"

Tom Pynsent looked aghast.

"Every body but yourself has observed the thing," said young Spottiswoode. "Haven't they, Tyndal?"

"Where are your eyes, Pynsent?" asked Mr. Vyvyan. "I detected the lady the moment you addressed her."

"'Love in her eyes for ever plays,'" sang Mr. Wycherly. "'It makes her rosy lips his care.'"

"'And walks the mazes of her hair,'" added Mr. Vyvyan.

Tom Pynsent gazed on each speaker in silent amazement: no pencil could pourtray the workings of his countenance.

"Who would sorrow for the cold-hearted, when a handsome girl worships the ground one treads upon?" cried Mr. John Tyndal. "Not I for one."

"I wish she would give *me* one of those dove-like glances she bestows upon the dull-headed Pynsent," sighed Mr. Henry Tyndal.

"By Jove, gentlemen, I don't consider myself dull!" at last Tom Pynsent burst forth. "I know many ladies who would like to live at Hatton, though they care little enough about

its master; but I deny your present statement. Who is the lady you allude to?"

"Go and ask Miss Wetheral to dance, Pynsent, and she will assist you in solving our riddle," said Mr. Wycherly, laughing.

"Good heavens! if a woman looked in my eyes, as I saw a lady consulting yours just now, Pynsent, I should feel myself called upon to fall desperately in love," observed his friend Vyvyan.

"God bless my soul! do you mean that *Miss* Wetheral likes me?"

Tom Pynsent uttered the question with an agitated and hurried tone of voice, which caused a general laugh among his auditors, but Mr. Wycherly spoke seriously and looked in earnest.

"You were in love with her sister, Pynsent, and had no time to observe other women. Every one else could read in the expression of Miss Wetheral's manner and countenance her decided liking for you."

"God bless my soul!" again ejaculated Tom Pynsent, "I never saw her look me in the face in my life!"

"My dear fellow, you are as green as a girl in her sixteenth year. Do you fancy a woman

stares at you by way of shewing her true love? Her downcast looks and melancholy appearance betray her. She only brightens up when you address her, and to all other men she is cold as an iceberg. Such are Miss Wetheral's symptoms, and such are all delicate-minded women's manners, when they are not hunting down a fortune. I know the sex, Pynsent."

"Such a woman is worth a thousand scornful dames," remarked old Mr. Tyndal.

"Pynsent looks petrified!" exclaimed young Spottiswoode.

"Pynsent at fault, by the Lord Harry!" laughed his friend Vyvyan.

"Cold scent, Pynsent, after your late run," cried Spottiswoode, entertained beyond measure at poor Tom's *égaré* looks.

The group of gentlemen rallied unmercifully their bewildered companion upon his dull reception of a piece of intelligence which would have raised any other man from the dead. Tom Pynsent's temper stood all jibes with unwearied patience, and when his mind had somewhat recovered the standard of its usual tone, he rebutted their attacks in his own loud tone of voice.

"I don't mind any of your jokes; if a woman

likes me seriously, I shall be sure to return it, and be very much obliged to her. I like Miss Wetheral very much, but I did not suppose she cared for me; how could I?"

"Why, you flirted with her abominably, once," remarked young Spottiswoode.

"Yes, perhaps I did so, but I had no idea she minded my nonsense."

"Young girls are easily caught, Pynsent, at first coming out. You certainly trifled with poor Miss Wetheral," said Mr. Tyndal.

"Did I? then I'll be hanged if I don't marry her!"

A roar of laughter followed this announcement, but Tom Pynsent was nothing daunted; he coolly withdrew from his companions, and sought Anna Maria, who received him with placid manners, and suppressed pleasure.

Tom Pynsent was now enlightened on one material point; and his vanity was touched, by the knowledge that the beautiful Miss Wetheral, so remarkable for her loveliness and extraordinary coldness of manner, did indeed love him in silence, above all his companions, and independently of Hatton! She had loved him in spite of his proposal to her sister! She had borne

the knowledge of her sister's rivalship in patient gentleness! She was at that moment receiving him with kind and conciliating manners, though she knew he had asked another to be his wife! Tom Pynsent's heart did justice to her suffering and affection; and he mentally vowed he would secure a prize so long unvalued, because so totally misunderstood. From that moment he attached himself exclusively to Miss Wetheral.

How did the hours glide by that eventful evening, in the imagination of the two happy sisters! How triumphant did Lady Wetheral appear as she glanced at both daughters!

There was Lord Ennismore publicly displaying his engagement with Julia, and Tom Pynsent was stationed at the side of Anna Maria, in deep, and, apparently, agreeable discourse. Her triumph was commented upon, by the Mesdames Tyndal and Pynsent.

"Oh, be hanged to her!" cried the latter lady, "she has got one daughter hooked on Ennismore, and now she's driving at Tom: only watch her manœuvres. I knew what she was at, Mrs. Tyndal, when she made her visit to Court Herbert some years ago. Miss Wetheral

was a child, but I smoked the meaning of it. She was vapouring then, after Tom."

"Lady Wetheral has been very fortunate with her daughters," replied Mrs. Tyndal. "Mr. Boscawen was an eligible match, and Lord Ennismore of course, in the eye of the world, is of still higher consideration."

"I think, if I had ten portionless daughters, I would not give one of them to that poor decayed fellow, and as I always told my son, Tom; 'If you bring me home a Wetheral, I'll be hanged if I receive her, and my word is as good as your own."

Mrs. Tyndal was accustomed to her companion's manly style of expression; so indeed was every family in the county. Mrs. Pynsent was tolerated in her youth on account of her large fortune; she was tolerated in middle-life as the mistress of Hatton; she was sought in her old age, as the mother of her son Tom. Thus Mrs. Pynsent passed through society without a single accomplishment, or even the attributes of a female, supported by the powerful shield of wealth, and feared for the determination of her sentiments and the coarseness of her remarks, by all her acquaintance.

Separated from her masculine propensities, Mrs. Pynsent was a warm-hearted, well-meaning person, and many young people could bear witness, that if Mrs. Pynsent often offended their ears, or dealt a merciless blow at their vanity, she had also befriended them in their need, and in sorrow or sickness, there was none kinder, or more patient. Why Mrs. Pynsent spoke so bitterly against a "Wetheral" never could be divined; probably some early prejudice influenced her in deprecating the name.

Mrs. Tyndal expressed surprise at Mrs. Pynsent's observation to her son.

"Really, Mrs. Pynsent, I cannot agree with you in such very determined dislike to the Miss Wetherals. I think my sons might make a far worse choice than either lady present."

"By Jove!" replied Mrs. Pynsent, shrugging her shoulders, "I hope Tom will never choose an empty doll from Wetheral: my brother Wycherly hinted to me the other day Tom had been disappointed of one of them, but I gave him my thoughts upon the matter: 'Bill,' I said, 'if any man could prove to me my son Tom had made an offer to a Wetheral, I'd kick him down stairs for his pains, and out of the

Hatton grounds.' My brother Bill never renewed that subject!"

Mrs. Tyndal glanced towards Anna Maria, who was still engaged in conversation with Tom Pynsent, and a smile passed over her face. Mrs. Pynsent caught the smile and look.

"Oh, you need not think about Tom in that quarter!" she observed. "Tom knows I hate the name."

At that moment Miss Wetheral and her companion joined the dancers.

"Your son distinguishes Miss Wetheral to-night," said her friend, with rather more *espièglerie* than their friendship warranted.

"Not a bit of it; I don't believe a word of it." At that instant her eye caught Tom dancing with all his might, and she beheld his *vis-a-vis* exchanging smiles with him: her colour rose.

"By Jove! he's dancing with her a second time, and there's that superannuated father of his, looking on! Wouldn't any one think Mr. Pynsent was staring at a puppet-show? I'll take the old gentleman home."

Mrs. Pynsent rose for the purpose of joining her husband, who was enjoying the appare

gaiety of his son. Lady Wetheral joined her at that most inopportune moment, and began a subject most offensive to her feelings.

"I am delighted to see your son in such excellent spirits to-night, my dear Mrs. Pynsent: it is an infectious disorder which I already feel stealing upon me. Such joyous spirits generally take effect upon those around."

"What ails Tom that he should not be gay?" growled Mrs. Pynsent. "Mothers court him and daughters flirt with him; what else can he require in a ball-room?"

Lady Wetheral felt piqued.

"The last time I had the pleasure of seeing your son, he was not so gaily inclined. I am glad his dejection has passed away."

"When did you see Tom out of spirits?" abruptly inquired Mrs. Pynsent.

"At Wetheral," replied her ladyship, in a gentle tone, while her heart longed for farther questioning.

"Umph! Men require spirits sometimes, when they are running the gauntlet."

"Mr. Pynsent won my admiration and regard by his honourable manner of acting," continued Lady Wetheral, who had now got into deep

water; "he was always a particular favourite of mine, and I deeply regretted my daughter did not accept a man so much....."

"Your daughter! who are you talking about? —what has my son to do with any of your daughters?" Mrs. Pynsent was evidently beginning to chafe, but she had offended by her allusions to mothers and daughters, and she was destined to receive punishment from Lady Wetheral's hands.

"I am afraid I have alluded to circumstances which have not been made known to you, my dear Mrs. Pynsent, and I beseech you not to remember what has passed my lips: I was of course perfectly certain you were no stranger to certain events at Wetheral, or I would have withheld this unfortunate communication; I thought you knew....."

"I know nothing, Lady Wetheral; and what is more, I have no desire to know any thing: have the kindness to let me pass."

Mrs. Pynsent passed on, as her ladyship fell back with polite ease of manner at her wish; but the iron had entered into her soul. The diamond aigrette upon her green satin turban paled under the flashing of her eyes as she proceeded up the

room towards Lady Spottiswoode. Lady Wetheral confessed afterwards, her triumph at that moment repaid her for many bitter taunts on the part of her victim.

Whatever might be the opinion of Mrs. Pynsent respecting an alliance with "a Wetheral," her son was plunging into the scrape with formidable determination. He had truly admired Julia; he had been severely disappointed by her refusal; but then she never cared for him, and he had applied to her father in doubt and fearful suspicion that she preferred Ennismore. There was a lovely and admired creature positively in love with him—a girl, too, considered by the men inaccessible to all approach—even Vyvyan detected her attachment, and the Tyndals envied him; this was irresistible; and Tom Pynsent forgot every thing, in the flattering, rapturous idea that he was loved by such a woman. His attention that night was extremely marked, and Miss Wetheral, glowing with happy elation of spirits, listened with deep interest to the half-sentimental, half-awkward conversation of her partner. At the conclusion of the dance, which attracted the attention of Mrs. Tyndal, Tom Pynsent became more seriously sentimental and red-faced.

"Miss Wetheral, I think a man may love twice, mayn't he?"

"He may so," replied Anna Maria, "but no one ever loves with depth of affection a second time; how can they?"

Tom Pynsent looked at his gloves, and then upon the ground. "Indeed I don't know."

"The first affection," she continued, with feeling, "unites all the best feelings in their intensity; but when they are crushed, those feelings bloom no more, though they may not be extinguished."

"Sometimes one's first love is a silly affair," remarked Tom, looking inquisitively, yet alarmed, at his companion.

"They may be silly, and they may be objectionable, Mr. Pynsent; but they destroy happiness at the time, and a first sorrow is the bitterest."

"I think I could love a second time just as well as I did at first, if I knew a nice girl liked me, and believed what I told her—" Tom Pynsent stopped. A deep sigh from Anna Maria disordered him, but it animated his courage at the same time.

"I know many people very happy with their second loves," said Tom Pynsent, looking shy.

"Men may love twice, but women never, if they really feel an attachment for an object," answered Miss Wetheral.

"I liked your sister Julia extremely, Miss Wetheral; but she did not care about me, and a man cannot always be miserable about a woman who runs out of his way. I would rather love a woman who liked me in return, and would not check me with stern looks. I am sure I should love my wife very much; and if she objected to hunting, I would never go out more than four days in the week, and I am sure she might have her own way in every thing."

Anna Maria coloured with emotion, and turned from the eager gaze of her companion; her timidity gave increased animation to the speaker, and he proceeded boldly.

"I'm sure any woman need not mind *me:* I am rough, but then a wife musn't mind those little things, and if I swear, it won't be at *her.* A man swears to make himself understood, and sometimes one swears a little for something to do; but my wife need not mind those trifles, need she, Miss Wetheral?"

"That would depend upon circumstances."

"But should *you?*" asked Tom.

"I never heard you swear, Mr. Pynsent—much—"

Tom Pynsent drew himself up with strong approbation and pleased vanity. "Shall we dance again, Miss Wetheral?"

"We have danced together twice this evening, Mr. Pynsent."

"Well, and what then?"

"People will remark," hesitated Anna Maria; "no gentleman dances three times with—that is—I really can't tell."

"But if we like to dance together, what is that to any one?" Tom rose and took her hand. "If you will not dance with me, I shall be sure you don't wish it."

Anna Maria rose, though reluctantly.

"It is not my wish to decline dancing, Mr. Pynsent: I only dislike making myself publicly remarked for breaking established rules."

"Never mind rules, Miss Wetheral; we will dance together, in spite of every thing. Who minds what people say, if we like to dance together!"

Julia and Lord Ennismore passed at the moment Anna Maria was debating with her partner: Julia smiled. "My dear Anna Maria, the

young ladies are complaining of you as a monopoliser; they say you have been keeping Mr. Pynsent from his usual half dozen partners, and there is a combination to vote you out of all ball invitations."

"I cannot allow Miss Wetheral to listen to such abominable nonsense," said Tom Pynsent, privately delighted at the idea of being observed; "she has promised to be guided by me this evening, so we are going to dance together for the third time."

"Come and stand by us then in the country dance." Julia pressed the hand of her sister with affectionate meaning, which Anna Maria returned, as they proceeded together to the set which was then forming. For an instant they were able to exchange whispers.

"Oh, Julia, my heart is tranquil, I am again happy!"

"Glad of it, go on, and mind nobody's looks or remarks." In another instant their partners claimed them.

"I say, father, just observe cousin Tom," said Miss Wycherly, touching her father's arm; "do look at Tom smiling upon Miss Wetheral, and looking so red-faced and happy. That

will be a match, after all; I shall congratulate him."

"Let him alone, Pen, let him alone, and congratulate him when he asks for it. Girls will always be poking their noses into matches, and making mischief. Say nothing to Tom, and say nothing to your aunt."

"But my aunt will be distracted, father, at the match."

"Pooh, pooh, let your aunt and Tom manage their own affairs; they can both take their own parts."

"Gads!" cried Miss Wycherly; "Tom is just going to dance with Miss Wetheral the third time, father; the third time, as I am alive, father! Well, that will do for my aunt if she sees it."

Mr. Vyvyan came up at that moment to request the pleasure of dancing with Miss Wycherly. Miss Wycherly kept her glass to her eye, and continued observing the party as she replied, "No, I can't dance with any body now, I'm looking at Tom." Mr. Vyvyan bowed with an offended air and withdrew.

"Pen, you were very rude," observed Mr. Wycherly.

as I?"

s, you were; devilish rude."

hat did he come worrying me for, when I tching Tom. Gads! father, Tom is something to the purpose now. Miss al has given him such a look: poor Tom, ver with him! Where in the world is ynsent?—somebody find me aunty—I all things to see her fire up!"

harles Spottiswoode begged the honour Wycherly's hand for the following dance.

n't dance with any of you; I am busy for my aunt," replied the lady, seating

me assist you in your search, Miss ly;" and Mr. Spottiswoode seated him- tly beside her. Miss Wycherly was by the action.

rles Spottiswoode, you may call this con- but I can only consider it tiresome: do dance with some lady who has not the n I have, to being worried. I hate tire- en!"

shall not desire to dance with you, but I

will not quit this place while you remain here," was the reply.

"Men always fancy perseverance will balance their demerits," said Miss Wycherly.

"Perseverance will do much," replied Mr. Spottiswoode, "if a lady values attention. Love is only proved by persevering constancy and untired assiduity."

"A very fine sentiment, Mr. Spottiswoode; but I can meet you in the field of disputation: I have always heard that 'love' was fearful, patient, and easily discouraged."

"*That* love must emanate from the heart of a poor devil, Miss Wycherly; not such a heart as you would prize."

"What do you presume to know of my taste, Mr. Spottiswoode?"

"I know that you would despise a creeping, frightened lover, as you dislike your horse for starting upon every application of the whip. You would prefer a decided admirer who bore with your flippancy, and feared not your power. You have such a lover in me, fair Penelope!"

"You are very tiresome and disagreeable, Mr. Spottiswoode."

"You like me better than you will acknowledge, Miss Wycherly."

"If that is all you can amuse me with, we might as well join the dancing," said Miss Wycherly. "But stay, I cannot; I have just declined Mr. Vyvyan."

"What is Mr. Vyvyan to you or me? the set is nearly completed, and we shall be too late." Mr. Spottiswoode offered his arm to his fair companion.

"No, I shall not dance to-night," said the capricious lady, rising and reseating herself. "My mind is changed."

"So is mine; I am going to flirt a little with Lady Anna Herbert. Chatting is far more agreeable than dancing, in a heated room. Lady Anna has smiled good-naturedly twice. I am glad you had the good taste to decline."

"I said I should not dance, but I did not say I would not talk, Mr. Spottiswoode; how very anxious you are to take up one's meaning." Mr. Spottiswoode only bowed to retire. Miss Wycherly softened the pettishness of her accent.

"Do stay, Mr. Spottiswoode, I have something particular to ask you; you flurry one with your rapidity."

Mr. Spottiswoode sat down. "I am all attention, Miss Wycherly."

"How can you look so cross at me, and speak in such dry tones, Charles Spottiswoode! I hate cross people."

"Then answer me one simple question in truth and sincerity, or I am gone for ever, Penelope Wycherly."

"Gads! how you plague one! Well, what is it?"

"I will know whether you mean to accept me after all this flippancy. If you do not intend it, say so; but I demand a reply."

"Then you wish to flirt with Lady Anna, Mr. Charles, and you think

> 'It is good to be off with the old love,
> Before you be on with the new.'"

"You have not answered me," returned Mr. Spottiswoode, seriously; "answer me, as you hope yourself to be fairly treated."

"I vow I don't know what I mean; it is very difficult to make one's choice among such a variety of Lords of the creation. I have not been introduced to Mr. Jones yet. I can't say I admire Tom's friend."

"I am answered, Miss Wycherly; I wish

you good night." Mr. Spottiswoode turned from the coquette, and walked up the dancing-room, without attending to Miss Wycherly's recal. The lady became alarmed. Was Mr. Spottiswoode's movement really intentional, or was he showing her how indifferently he could take leave, to compel her into acceptance? There he was positively talking to Lady Anna Herbert, and looking perfectly composed. Lady Anna was a notorious flirt, but she should not entrap Charles Spottiswoode! Miss Wycherly was not accustomed to be treated with *nonchalance*; and that Mr. Spottiswoode, her lover of long standing, should summon courage enough to stand upon the defensive against her coquetry, piqued her to the soul. She sought Julia, who was dancing with Lord Ennismore.

"Miss Wycherly unattended!" cried Mr. Henry Tyndal, as he met her on her way to the dancers, "take my arm."

"Be quiet," said the lady, passing on with her glass raised to her eye, "do be quiet."

"Miss Wycherly, you are after mischief; you are darting arrows at some poor wretch through that missile," continued young Tyndal, following her.

"I am darting nothing, unless you are my arrow, in which case I should delight to throw you to an incredible distance."

"You are witty, Miss Wycherly," returned young Tyndal, "and whenever you are witty, you are angry."

Miss Wycherly made no reply; she saw and approached Julia.

"Julia Wetheral, I beseech you to do me a service."

"I will gladly assist you, if it is in my power," replied Julia; "what is required of me?"

"Oh, leave the dance, and listen to me. Lord Ennismore will follow us, when he perceives you have quitted the set; here let us be seated, and I will tell you my anxiety."

Julia smilingly listened to Miss Wycherly's statement of her little coquetry, and the offended departure of Mr. Spottiswoode.

"And now," she said, "I know you will help me, and just make my peace with Charles. I won't give him the triumph of knowing he has frightened me, but in your playful way you can discover what Spottiswoode means. He has positively threatened to flirt with Lady Anna;

and, whether I like him or not, he must not appear unconcerned with another woman. My dear, that would kill me. I can't part with Charles Spottiswoode in that way, you know, and I just want you to sound him. Now go, there's a dear creature; leave Lord Ennismore with me."

Julia undertook the mission, and Lord Ennismore consigned himself, not to the care of Miss Wycherly, but to the side of his lady mother.

"My dear son, I have witnessed Julia's flight, and your consternation," said her ladyship; "you are fortunate in possessing a foolishly-fond mother to retire to in these emergencies."

"I am always very glad to come to you, mother," replied the poor effeminate young man, seating himself between her ladyship and Lady Wetheral.

Julia was some minutes in playful conversation with Mr. Spottiswoode, and Miss Wycherly watched her movements with eager attention; at last Julia approached.

"Well, my dear, what does he say? Tell me at once, is he going to dance with Lady Anna?"

"Mr. Spottiswoode is very much hurt, Pene-

lope, and, if you are not cautious, you will lose him."

"Oh, my dear girl, don't say so. Lose him? No, I'll be hanged, as my aunt says, if he gets away from me, to be one of Lady Anna's swains! I must come down, I see, though it grates me dreadfully."

"Make haste, as you value Mr. Spottiswoode," replied Julia, "or he will be dancing with Lady Anna. He is looking at us at this moment; now, Penelope, smile, smile, and beckon him to you for ever—don't trifle—now, now, Penelope!"

"My dear, the smile would kill me. I can't smile at Spottiswoode, to show him his power, and make him impudent. No, I cannot smile yet, Julia."

"There, Penelope, he has asked Lady Anna to dance, and they are standing up! You have lost him by your foolish coquetting, upon my honour!"

Miss Wycherly turned pale, but her feelings struggled with pride. "Oh, well then, let him dance away, I care not. It is of little consequence whether Mr. Spottiswoode prefers Lady Anna or myself. I shall not condescend to beg

pardon for any thing I chose to say to a silly creature, who cannot command his temper."

"For shame, Penelope! you *do* care, and you do mind Mr. Spottiswoode dancing with Lady Anna; when the dance is ended, tell him you have done wrong."

"He might have seen by my looks, Julia, I was not in earnest, or, at least, that I did not mean him to think so."

"Then tell him so, Penelope."

"Not I, indeed. I never will submit to own myself wrong to a man before marriage, or after either, if I can help it. Spottiswoode may rue the hour he offended me, for never will I condescend to ask him to return to a woman whom he chooses to leave for such a person as Lady Anna. Any other girl I could have borne patiently. This I will not forgive, for he knew it would vex me! hang me, *à la* Pynsent, if I do not repay him in kind."

"I can be of no further use, Penelope?"

"None, Julia, but I thank you for what you have done, though it has proved ineffectual. Do not let me detain you from your party."

Julia endeavoured to appease her companion, but her lover's careless indifference gave deep

offence to Miss Wycherly, and she persisted in maintaining an equal appearance of light-hearted manner, to deceive and distress Mr. Spottiswoode. She was not long without materials to assist her design; Mr. Henry Tyndal again applying to her, Miss Wycherly accepted him as a partner, and she passed her lover in the country dance with inimitably affected composure and gaiety. How did that really attached couple endeavour to vie with each other in assuming a coldness foreign to their hearts; and how wretchedly did they pass the remainder of the evening in a state of miserable watching and suffering! Miss Wycherly, in her most laughing dialogue with Henry Tyndal, cast perturbed and anxious looks towards Lady Anna Herbert, who was listening with smiling and marked attention to Mr. Spottiswoode's compliments. Her heart felt withered, yet she redoubled her gaiety; Miss Wycherly was almost noisy in her mirth, and the sound of her voice disturbed the serenity of Mr. Spottiswoode, and made him falter in his own sallies. Lady Anna rebuked him.

"How now, Mr. Spottiswoode! you have said the same thing three times consecutively. What am I to understand by this absence of ideas?"

"You have confounded them, Lady Anna."

"I did not flatter myself I had power to confound your learned mind, Mr. Spottiswoode," returned the lady.

"I shall not be the first, nor the last, whom your ladyship has confounded; all our heads become turned in your society."

"Very well; I declare I shall tell Miss Wycherly how you flirt."

"Pray do, Lady Anna; Miss Wycherly is coming down with Mr. Tyndal."

"Very well; Miss Wycherly, what do you think Mr. Spottiswoode says?"

"Cross hands and back again, and never mind what Mr. Spottiswoode says," said Miss Wycherly. "I am flying down the middle." Away she went.

"I saw Miss Wycherly did not touch you in cross hands, Mr. Spottiswoode, but here she comes again."

The party made their *pousette* in high glee, Miss Wycherly appearing wholly engaged in some joke with Henry Tyndal, and Mr. Spottiswoode showering compliments upon Lady Anna. Tom Pynsent and Anna Maria, who stood near

the set, and heard the dialogue, were much amused.

"Cousin Pen has quarrelled with Spottiswoode," he remarked, "and there will be a pretty battle; hear how he is laying it into Lady Anna Herbert. I should not like quarrelling, should you, Miss Wetheral?"

"Oh, no, surely not."

"Quarrelling is a rum sort of going on, Miss Wetheral. I don't think you ever quarrel."

"Never, when I have my own way," replied Miss Wetheral, smiling.

"I'm sure my wife would have her own way, if that was all she cared about, Miss Wetheral."

Miss Wetheral was silent.

"I wish I was married to a woman who would be good-natured, and not given to be huffed upon all occasions," resumed Tom Pynsent. "I think a bachelor's life very uncomfortable."

Miss Wetheral trembled violently, but she loved Tom Pynsent too fondly to be able to assist his meaning; her heart beat audibly, but she remained silent.

"You ride on horseback, Miss Wetheral, very often, don't you?"

"Yes, frequently."

"I wish you would let me ride with you; I am sure you do not know half the country about Wetheral. I suppose I may escort you, Miss Wetheral?" Tom Pynsent began to feel great stoutness of heart, in proportion as Anna Maria grew timid and embarrassed.

"I shall be happy—we shall feel ——." She hesitated.

"To be sure; well, then, I shall be at Wetheral to-morrow, and, if you are not fatigued, I will show you a monstrous fine view."

"But your hunting-day is to-morrow, Mr. Pynsent."

"Never mind hunting for a day or so, Miss Wetheral; I don't mind being laughed at. I want very much to show you that view, so mind we are engaged to-morrow."

How lightly did Miss Wetheral's heart beat at that moment! how was she repaid for months of miserable feeling!

It was during the bustle of breaking up, that Miss Wycherly glided towards Julia, and unbosomed her feelings.

"My dear soul, I am the most wretched woman existing; that creature has vexed me to the

soul with his flirtation, and my only hope is that I have given him a tweak in return."

"Take care, Penelope!"

"Oh, I shall care about nothing but repiquing. As long as Spottiswoode flirts with Lady Anna, so long I shall flirt with that half spoony Tyndal junior, if my heart breaks under it. How happy you are, Julia, and how miserable am I! You have chained your lover, whereas, mine bounds away at a touch. Now, there, look at him, cloaking Lady Anna, as if she was made of spun glass, and bringing her just under my very eyes. I will bear that man's insult with perfect gaiety —watch me now—good night!"

Miss Wycherly passed on with apparent light-heartedness, and addressed Lady Anna Herbert.

"How you have footed it this night, Lady Anna! Mr. Henry Tyndal declares you are the pride of Shropshire in a ball-room. I was quite jealous. Lord Farnborough is waiting for you, with Lady Jessy, but I shall tell them you are too agreeably occupied to move away yet."

"Oh, no, really I am quite ready," replied her ladyship: "but Mr. Spottiswoode's compliments are so lengthy, they will never arrive at -

conclusion; what do you think he has been saying?"

"Oh, I guess, Lady Anna.

'Will ye gang to the bourne, Marion,
Will ye gang to the bourne with me?'

I can't continue the song, for my father beckons, but fare you well." Miss Wycherly kissed her hand playfully, and walked gaily up the room, which was thinning very fast.

"That was excellently done," observed Lady Emsmore to Julia, as they proceeded to the carriage, "but it will cost your friend her night's rest, and her lover into the bargain. That fragment of song, and the careless manner which accompanied its delivery, will throw the gentleman into Lady Anna's power."

Anna Maria was escorted to the carriage by Tom Pynsent, and Lady Wetheral triumphantly and delightedly invited him to Wetheral, whenever he felt inclined to do them honour by his presence.

"Certainly, Mr. Pynsent, Lady Spottiswoode's parties bear away the bell amongst us; every thing is so agreeably arranged, so many extremely pleasant people gathered together! Wetheral will prove fast-days after such an evening as this,

but fasts are enjoined, you know. Mortifi
are proper to subdue the spirit."

"I am engaged to ride with Miss W
to-morrow," replied Tom Pynsent, with a
hesitation of speech, and a remarkably sill
"I am to show her a monstrous fine view

"How very kind! my daughter is r
quainted with our *distant* views, Mr. P
and your polite attention will be the m
increasing her pleasures. Miss Wethe
lights in fine scenery. You must dine w
my dear sir; we shall not allow you to ru
after, perhaps, a long and fatiguing ride
dear Lord Ennismore, thank you for bring
Julia, but where is her ladyship?"

"Lord Farnborough is escorting my n
our carriage has just drawn up, and she b
will drive on without waiting for her.
talking to the Farnboroughs, and I am g
join her. We shall be at Wetheral befor

"Oh yes, your horses are much too spe
my fears. Well, then, my dear Julia, we w

Wetheral, "I always admired Ennismore, but his filial attentions are beautiful."

Tom Pynsent could not forbear a smile at her ladyship's enthusiastic admiration; he wished the party good night.

"Good night, good night," said Lady Wetheral and Julia, kissing their hands to the receding figure of Mr. Pynsent. Anna Maria did not speak her adieus, neither did she wave her hand, but she bent forward to watch the last glimpse of his athletic form, as it disappeared among the groups, who were waiting for their carriages.

CHAPTER VII.

Tom Pynsent's ride with Miss Wetheral only led the way to repeated engagements at Wetheral on his part, and on Lady Wetheral's side, to affectionate welcomes and smiles upon his entrance. At every opportunity, and upon every occasion, Tom Pynsent was appointed to take charge of "dear Anna Maria," and her ladyship thanked him in flattering terms for the delightful accession of health which Miss Wetheral had gained by constant and agreeable horse-exercise.

Anna Maria did, indeed, gain both health and happiness from the repeated *tête-à-têtes* which fell to her lot with the man she loved. The tone of conversation, his shy manner — so like his manner with Julia—his anxiety to form fresh engagements to meet again; all convinced her his affections were surrendered to herself. Her

cheek resumed its bloom, her eye regained its brightness, and her figure became more elastic; there was hope in her smiles, and lightness in her movements, which formed an extraordinary change in the once insipid Miss Wetheral. Anna Maria must ever appear gentle and peculiarly feminine, but she was no longer painfully inert or tranquil, to a death-like stillness. It was a rapid and complete change; a change which proved how powerfully unrequited love had dealt with a heart which could now rise at the touch of affection, from torpid listlessness, to the joys of life; which could spring at once from cold and weary melancholy, to the light and warmth of a joyous mind, revelling in happy prospects.

Sir John Wetheral perceived Tom Pynsent's attentions with pleasure. His honest heart and honourable feelings promised every happiness, he said, to a woman who could prefer heart to head, and, if Anna Maria had the sense to choose him instead of the lordlings whom Julia coveted, he could insure her a happy married life, if it were not her own fault. He wished he could prophecy equal content to Julia, but she had planned her own marriage, and she must abide the issue; Lady Wetheral must blame herself, if Julia was

unhappy, for she had brought up her daughters to consider wealth and station a balance to the weight of matrimonial misery, and her remarks and sentiments taught Julia to believe she had done well in selling herself to the highest bidder.

Lady Wetheral never could endure her husband's observations, when they touched upon her government of children, and his present remarks brought down a thousand reproaches.

"I think, Sir John, you might spare me what I can only term abuse, and which you level at me now upon all occasions."

"My dear, you are wrong; abuse never issues from my lips."

"I call that abuse," she returned, "which throws blame over all my actions, and which is not true. You are imputing, I may say, infamous motives to me; and, while I am ever ready to advance my daughter's happy and respectable establishments, you thunder blame from your study, yet never assist yourself in a work of so much importance. Had it not been for me, Lord Ennismore would never have proposed to Julia, and, had I not watched Tom Pynsent, and drawn him constantly to Wetheral, he might never have transferred his affections to

Anna Maria. In all this, Sir John, you have never assisted me; and what your conscience will accuse you of on your death-bed, I know not; mine will give me consolation in my last hour, in thinking I have performed my duties to my children. You are obstinately resolved to imagine Julia is marrying against her better judgment; but, my love, your time and mine is gone by, and we must not judge of a young woman's affection by our own feelings. I can quite understand Julia's attachment to Lord Ennismore, and she could not be expected to forego that attachment, to please your fastidious taste."

"This is not a matter of taste," replied Sir John; "it involves a deep principle. Julia is marrying Ennismore, because his title has blinded her judgment; her ambition is gratified, and her affections are yielded up to its influence. Your sentiments have fostered her conduct, and you will suffer by its effects, Gertrude."

"Sir John, any one would think you a professed booby," exclaimed his lady, warmly; "any one would suppose you mad to hear you croaking and grieving, because your daughter is

on the point of marriage with a peer of large fortune, and excellent character."

"Ennismore has no character at all, Gertrude."

"Then Julia will govern him, Sir John; don't be uneasy about that."

"Not while his mother lives."

"Nonsense; Julia will do what she pleases; don't talk to me of old mothers; who ever minds their mothers? If Tom Pynsent cared for his mother, he would not pay attention to Anna Maria. No, no, that is a very poor plea against Lord Ennismore. If Tom Pynsent would propose at once, my girls might marry the same day; he intends to propose, of course, but he is a long time about it. He was quicker in asking Julia."

"He has learned experience," said her husband, smiling.

"Men are so stupid," returned Lady Wetheral; "they show their intentions, and yet linger at the threshold. I will find out his meaning the next time we meet, but I shall enter upon the subject with great tact—you need not look so alarmed."

"Remember the fate of Mrs. Primrose's attack upon Mr. Thornhill, Gertrude."

Lady Wetheral affected not to hear when any subject offended or interfered with her ideas of propriety; in this case, she was absolutely deaf, and her thoughts took a more excursive range.

"When my two daughters are disposed of, Clara will, of course, come forward, and her remarkable style of beauty will soon attract attention and admiration. I do not consider Clara particularly gifted, but her appearance will more than balance her want of intellect. Your pet, Chrystal, as you call her, will be a sort of companion for her, though the child is disgustingly forward and pert, as I always prognosticated she would be."

Christobelle was seated upon a stool at her father's feet, when this dialogue took place; he patted her head at the conclusion of Lady Wetheral's speech, and observed how companionable she had been, and still proved to be, in his solitude. "If," he remarked, "the other girls had been brought up to study, instead of being married from the nursery, they would prove better companions and better wives, in the duties they are resolved to encounter."

"That is a remark so like you, my dear, that I am somewhat weary of the dull round of sentiment; Miss Chrystal, what are you poring over?"

Christobelle rose, and presented her book.

"Ah, very well; Miss Edgeworth is very clever with her chemistry, and that prattling Rosamond, but she never married, and never will marry. I never allowed my girls to read these kind of books, to make them careless about their appearance, and disagreeably learned to men. I never found a clever woman anxious to please, and in general they do some extraordinary thing or other, like Miss Wycherly, who is clever, but she drives herself about in a very masculine manner. There, my dear, take back your book; if you turn out a reading lady, you will be an object of dislike, and men will shun you; but, pray remember, you belong to your father; *I* have no hand in your education."

"Chrystal will be a treasure to the man who wins her," said Sir John.

"Yes, yes, she will do for Leslie, or be a treasure to that dirty antiquarian, Cromleholm's son, Philip; but I wish to ask your opinion; must we really have Mrs. Pynsent at Julia's wedding?"

"How can you avoid it, Gertrude?"

"I wish I knew some method of avoiding the invitation, without giving offence."

"How so? You have formed an intimacy with her, and professed to esteem her."

"That's another thing. One esteems people for different reasons, and esteem means nothing. I always kept up an intimacy for the girls' sakes, but I cannot endure her very abrupt manners. She is very offensive."

"My dear Gertrude, you must manage your own affairs: you formed the intimacy, to my great astonishment."

"I never receive assistance from you, Sir John. Never mind how or why I formed the intimacy; it is sufficient that I wish to escape her society at Julia's wedding; can I manage it?"

"I think not."

"I must then endure her. I see Mr. Pynsent, Tom I mean, riding up the park; I must ask Anna Maria." Lady Wetheral hastily quitted the apartment.

Tom Pynsent arrived, and was ushered into the sitting-room, where Lady Wetheral was seated alone; she was apparently startled by his entrance.

"My dear Mr. Pynsent, there is an old s
ing, and not a very refined one, which has b
exemplified in myself at this moment. I w
thinking of you, and wishing to see you,
you entered."

"I am much obliged, Lady Wetheral; I
sure I am very much honoured by your thoughts
but where are the ladies?"

"Lady Ennismore has *chaperoned* some
the party in a drive to Shrewsbury. Lewis
shop has so many attractions for young people

"Is Miss Wetheral gone?" asked Tom Py
sent, in a tone of disappointment. "I want
hat, and I'll take this opportunity of riding
Shrewsbury. Any thing I can do for yo
Lady Wetheral?"

"I have given Julia a commission, thank yo
Anna Maria did not join the party. She is n
very well this morning."

Tom Pynsent had risen to depart; he now
reseated himself.

"Oh, if you have no commission to give me
I shall not ride so far; I can get a hat any
time. I hope Miss Wetheral is not confined
to her room."

"My daughter is not well, Mr. Pynsent

She looks much, very much improved by her exercise on horseback, and I am complimented upon her brilliant complexion and spirits, but I am not easy about her. I hope her fine complexion betrays no seeds of consumption; her spirits are not the spirits of health, I much fear."

"Good God! you don't think so!" cried Tom Pynsent, in alarm. "I thought Miss Wetheral never looked better than she has done for some weeks past."

Lady Wetheral shook her head.

"There is something not quite right, and I was wishing to see you, to observe that perhaps riding-exercise was too violent for her constitution. I think I must advise her to drive out in the phaeton, and try its effect; but many thanks are due to you, my dear Mr. Pynsent, for your kind and regular attendance upon my daughter. I have often heard her express much gratitude towards you."

"I shall be very happy, I am sure, to drive Miss Wetheral in any open carriage," remarked Tom, perfectly obtuse to the aim and end of his companion's purpose. "I can drive her to very many pleasant views."

"I thank you most sincerely for your more than kind politeness towards my daughter, which we all appreciate; but, my dear Mr. Pynsent, we must not draw down unnecessary observation; people are always inclined to remark upon —I think I must decline your agreeable offer, though with pain—I——."

"Well, and what can any one say if I drive out Miss Wetheral? There is no harm in attending an invalid in a drive, is there?"

Lady Wetheral laughed and coughed a little.

"No, Mr. Pynsent; no harm, though you have represented it so humorously; but remarks will be made, and are made. As a mother I feel those remarks, and I particularly beg you to understand, that it is quite against my own ideas of right—quite in opposition to my own feelings, that I am painfully called upon to withdraw my daughter from being publicly seen so frequently in your company, attended only by her servant."

Tom Pynsent twirled his hat, and was silent. Her ladyship proceeded.

"If the world, Mr. Pynsent, would only allow us to be happy our own way, how many agreeable hours might be enjoyed which are now de-

[redacted] us! Perhaps, as a mother, I *was* wrong in [redacted]owing my daughter so much in the society [redacted] a very agreeable man—the world says so; [redacted] I have the strongest dependence upon the [redacted]cretion and dignity of all my daughters, [redacted]erefore I have no fears: however, something [redacted] due to public opinion, and to that severe [redacted]entor, attribute the necessity of this painful [redacted]k. I hope I have not given offence by my [redacted]ncerity, Mr. Pynsent?"

Tom Pynsent was taken by surprise; his [redacted]greeable rides were ended, and his attendance [redacted]pon Anna Maria at once suspended by the [redacted]reath of public opinion. There was but one [redacted]y of recovering his former position at We-[redacted]heral, and Lady Wetheral had won the day!

"I think it very extraordinary that I am not [redacted] ride with a lady I like. Do you think, Lady Wetheral, a man is to be blamed if a lady re-[redacted]ses him, and he should like to propose to [redacted]nother?"

"I should consider a gentleman very weak [redacted]ho pined for a woman's indifferent heart, Mr. Pynsent," replied her ladyship, turning away to conceal the triumphant expression of her countenance.

"I am glad you are of my opinion, Lady Wetheral. I was very sorry Miss Julia refused me, for I thought her a very nice girl, and I was extremely attached to her; but I saw she did not care about me. Miss Wetheral is always kind-hearted and polite, and I don't think she dislikes me. I am sure I don't know, but if I thought she cared for me, I should like, like very much to—I should like to see Miss Wetheral, if you please. Do you think, Lady Wetheral, she would let me see her?" Tom Pynsent became extremely red-faced.

"She would see *you*, I am sure, Mr. Pynsent. Anna Maria said particularly this morning, 'If Mr. Pynsent calls, I shall see him, but no other gentleman.' I will ring, and let her know you are here."

There was silence for some minutes; at length her Ladyship rose.

"I make no apology for leaving you a short time alone, Mr. Pynsent. My daughter will soon take my place, and we shall consider you our guest for the day. I make no stranger of you. I must attend an appointment with our bailiff, and their complaints are without end. Sir John often makes Roberts over to me. Do not let me find you flown upon my return."

"I hope I shall not have occasion to depart, Lady Wetheral," said Tom Pynsent, struggling for composure.

"I will allow no departure, Mr. Pynsent. Anna Maria must detain you prisoner till Roberts allows me to escape. Mind, I lay my commands upon you to remain at Wetheral."

Lady Wetheral had scarcely closed the door upon her own exit, when Anna Maria entered at the opposite end of the room, blooming and happy; her eyes sparkled with pleasure, as they rested upon Tom Pynsent.

"I only heard of your arrival this instant," she said, as they shook hands; "you have not been here alone long, I hope."

Tom Pynsent placed a chair for the young lady, and seated himself near her, but for some moments he did not speak. Miss Wetheral looked at him with surprise. Tom Pynsent at length broke the awkward pause.

"I am sorry you are ill, Miss Wetheral."

"I never was better in my life, Mr. Pynsent," replied Anna Maria, smiling. "What makes you suppose I am ill?"

"I thought you looked very well, Miss Wetheral, but I was told you were poorly, and

I am sure you look as little like a consumptive person as any one I ever saw!"

"Who could invent such a fable?" inquired Anna Maria.

"I have heard something worse than that," continued Tom, hesitating, and walking to the window.

"Good heavens! about me! or any unpleasant news from Hatton?"

"Lady Wetheral says we are not to ride again together. I think it a very extraordinary thing, don't you?" Tom Pynsent looked at the distant Wrekin to appear unconcerned. He received no reply from Anna Maria.

"I think it a monstrous folly to deny one those kind of things," proceeded Tom, turning towards his companion, who sat gazing at him, pale as her own muslin dress. He was shocked at her appearance, and, forgetting his shyness in affectionate solicitude, he took both her hands in his.

"Miss Wetheral, do you mind it as much as I do? Just tell me if you mind it as I do?"

Anna Maria could only answer in alarm, and almost involuntarily "Yes."

Tom Pynsent could not command his feelings;

he caught her in his arms, and saluted her with a kiss, which might have been distinctly heard in the hall.

"I like a girl who speaks her mind without affectation and nonsense, and there's a good foxhunting kiss from your husband, if you will make me so, and we will ride together in spite of the devil."

Miss Wetheral's astonishment at the action, and her happiness at her lover's subsequent speech, prevented all reply; but she gave him her hand at once, though her face was covered with blushes. Tom Pynsent squeezed the little white hand with rapture, and her open dealing made a taciturn lover garrulous with approval.

"You *do* let me squeeze your hand, and you do *not* pretend to be offended because a man tells you he loves you! Who would have thought you were such an open-hearted, dear creature, without a bit of nonsense? Now, give me your other hand—there's a dear, beautiful girl as you are, and we may ride now to the world's end together. Perhaps, when we are married, you will ride with me to see the hounds throw off. I shall only hunt then three times a week. Lady Wetheral frightened me properly, when

she forbid my riding with you; however, I shall stay here to-day, and we can talk over things. You will walk with me, my dear girl, won't you?"

"I am in a labyrinth, I really am bewildered, Mr. Pynsent," replied Miss Wetheral, timidly. "Do not fancy me silly, but I really am bewildered, and hardly know what to say."

"You have said enough, quite enough," cried Tom Pynsent, squeezing her poor hands into his enormous palms. "You have accepted me, and I shan't allow you to leave me; I shall follow you like a dog till we are married: a little walk will be the very thing to refresh you. Let us walk in the park, and look at the Wrekin, and talk of our wedding-day."

Miss Wetheral mechanically obeyed her lover's request; and they were deeply absorbed in conversation, pacing up and down the avenue, when the party drove home from Shrewsbury.

"Mrs. Primrose has succeeded tolerably well, Sir John," observed Lady Wetheral, in the interim between Tom Pynsent's departure and the lighting of the chamber-candles—"Mrs. Primrose has caught Mr. Thornhill, in despite of your alarms." This was whispered to reach Sir John's ear only.

Lady Ennismore had something very obliging to say, and whenever she spoke, her flattering compliments soothed the ear of her object—she only framed sentences of compliment.

"My dear Miss Wetheral, a certain gentleman's gallant and unequivocal admiration of a peerless beauty, proves his excellent discriminating powers. I admire the lover, and approve his suit. I wish I had a daughter who was fortunate enough to attract Mr. Pynsent."

Anna Maria did not love Lady Ennismore; she even shrank from her address in general; yet her expressed approval of Tom Pynsent at once gained belief, and gave pleasure to her heart. On all sides, congratulations awaited her. Her father added his approval, and it was given with feeling and earnestness. Before all the assembled family-party, he told her he had no fears for her welfare, as the wife of an honest, high-principled man. He could congratulate her upon an engagement which must bring happiness to a woman who valued the texture of a heart such as Pynsent possessed. His wealth might surround her person with luxuries, but his good qualities alone could secure her peace of mind. He trusted Anna Maria would appre-

ciate and hold fast the affections of her future husband, and her lot would fall upon good ground. Pynsent was a man to whom he could intrust a daughter's happiness, and have no fears for her futurity.

Anna Maria's spirits were subdued under her father's earnest observations; her happiness, the suddenness of the event, and her future prospects, combined with the congratulations of her family, overpowered a mind which had long borne the alternations of hope, suspense, and fear. She sought refuge in her own room; Lady Wetheral and Julia followed; the one to offer soothing remedies, and to rejoice with her sister in the termination of her sorrow; the other to triumph in the success of her scheme: her ladyship's delight was boundless. To marry two daughters in one day to the first matches in Shropshire and Staffordshire, seemed an affair beyond common calculation: the lottery of life rarely threw two prizes consecutively into a family; and certainly her own generalship had secured both. In the exuberance of her spirits, she confessed to the sisters the ruse she had practised to elicit an offer from Tom Pynsent. Anna Maria was distressed.

"Oh, mamma, how could you take such a method; practising upon Tom's fears to hasten a declaration! How you frighten me; I might have lost him!"

"Poor Greenhorn! no, you had no chance of losing him; he was too much in love. I only prepared the way for him, to hasten the catastrophe. I particularly wished him to propose, because my mind is bent upon the double wedding, therefore I applied the goad very gently, but he answered the whip. The instant I mentioned your rides being discontinued, I saw the thing was done. My only hope now is, that Clara may succeed as you have done. There will be some difficulty in obtaining Mrs. Pynsent's consent perhaps, but I do not doubt a little management may succeed *there* to. Mrs. Pynsent is violent, but seldom firm; she will chafe and use very strong language, but she will be busy and delighted at your wedding, my love."

"But why do you consider Mrs. Pynsent objects, mamma?" asked Anna Maria, in alarm.

"Oh, she has some stupid notion that I have laid plans for her son, I fancy. Now, to suppose that I hunt for sons-in-law is absolute ab-

surdity. I wish my children to marry well, confess, but no one detests fortune-hunting mo than I do. I consider a manœuvring mother nuisance in society, and, therefore, Mrs. Py sent's notion is ridiculous—too ridiculous ev to confute. I shall get your father to make intimate acquaintance with Sir Foster Kerri Julia. He is a widower, but his eleven childr would not interfere with Clara's comforts: som may die, and the others might be sent to schoo I don't believe a word about his kicking h servants; if scandalous reports were believed very few of us could escape infamy. Servant are vile creatures, and would destroy *any* cha racter. Sir Foster is a very fine man, and not to be rejected because he may occasionally lose his temper. There are many provocations in life, which now and then cause a man's temper to ferment a little, but what would that signify to Clara? Tom Pynsent uses a few, perhaps, unnecessary oaths, but he means nothing; his temper is excellent: Sir Foster probably means no more. I shall ask his eldest daughter to Wetheral, when you are all gone; indeed, I shall require amusement; my spirits will be depressed enough when that melancholy day arrives, my dear girls."

Lady Wetheral's voice fell, and a deep sigh succeeded: she soon resumed, more gaily—

"I shall consider that day a proud and happy one, which allows me to give you to two of the best of men, after all, my loves. It will be my glory to see you united to men standing high in situation, excellent in conduct, possessing the means of showering luxuries upon you, and placing you at the head of magnificent establishments. Should Clara form an equally wealthy connexion, I should die in peace; but I can only consider Sir Foster Kerrison worthy to be related to you. If he has eleven children, he has immense estates in three counties, and I must manage to get Miss Kerrison to Wetheral. I should fear nothing, if Clara would only keep her temper; but I dread the daughter carrying tales back to Ripley: however, I will manage as well as I can, for something must be effected on my side. Good night, my dear girls; I hope you will have sons, and no daughters, for you cannot know a mother's anxiety about daughters — they depend so entirely upon forming proper establishments. Your poor father would never have interested himself about you. I do believe he would be perfectly satisfied if he

considered you destined to live hereafter as spinsters, huddled together in a lodging in Shrewsbury. Be well, Anna Maria; and, in future, you know I have no business to interfere with your rides and drives."

Her ladyship quitted the room, smiling complacently at the remembrance of her successful ruse; and the sisters were left together, to rejoice in and compare their happy prospects.

Lady Wetheral's idea of Mrs. Pynsent's objection, and her short-lived but violent wrath, was exemplified in her conduct, when her son stated his engagement to Miss Wetheral, before his parents, the morning subsequent to his proposal.

"Now hang me, Tom, if I would have believed such a thing from any body's lips but your own. So you have taken a bird out of the Wetheral nest, have you? You have been hunted down, neatly, Master Tom."

"In this particular," replied her son, "I have made my own choice, and my father made no objection when—"

"Who minds your father?" interrupted Mrs. Pynsent; "he never knows what he is about. He says 'yes' to every thing, and looks like a

booby besides. Now you may marry the girl, and take Hatton if you please, but I'll be hanged if *I* notice her! I'm serious, Master Tom."

Tom Pynsent allowed the storm to spend its fury, and Mrs. Pynsent proceeded with increased ire.

"To be gulled into marriage by that woman, Wetheral, drives me wild; but I never saw the man yet, who was not tricked into a trap by an artful woman, in spite of his teeth. Hang the whole set of them, and you too, for being a greater simpleton than your father!"

"If I was a simpleton," observed Mr. Pynsent, quietly, "it was in marrying a masculine lady."

"You be hanged, Bobby! you proposed to every girl you met. I was your fiftieth love, and you knew Sally Hancock and myself loved things out of the common way. I tell you what, Bobby—if Tom marries a Wetheral, you and I leave Shropshire. I won't stay in the country. If I meet her, I'll drive over her, Tom."

Tom Pynsent understood his mother's disposition, and acted accordingly. He assured her of his sorrow in perceiving her dislike to the

match; but, whatever disgust she might feel towards Lady Wetheral's conduct, the daughter was not involved in its folly. "When," continued he, "I proposed to Julia Wetheral, *she* refused me at once."

"You proposed to another of them!" cried Mrs. Pynsent, "and Bill Wycherly was right! You got huffed by one Wetheral, and then turned to another! Is this a true bill? Then I only just ask you, if simpleton is not too gentle an expression, Master Tommy, for such a poor thing as yourself? I only just ask you, if you don't think you are as nice an owl as ever was taken in by a set of manœuvring women? You'll hear enough of this, Tommy Pynsent! You and my Lord Ennismore are a couple of tight boys to be gulled by my lady. Here, make way for me—that I may go and tell my sister Hancock what a nice lad Master Pynsent has turned out. Never expect me to go near Wetheral, Bobby. I would sooner visit old Nick."

Mrs. Pynsent flung out of the room, with an air of offended majesty.

"Let your mother alone, Tom," said Mr. Pynsent, as the door closed upon his indignant lady. "Let her alone, and she won't long refuse

her consent. When she has unburthened her mind to Sally Hancock, and fizzed a little, all will be right again."

Mrs. Pynsent ordered her pony-carriage, and drove off to Lea Cottage, where her widowed sister resided upon a very small income. Mrs. Hancock was darning stockings, when her sister appeared before her with inflamed features.

"Hollo, Pen, what's the matter now?" cried Mrs. Hancock, calmly continuing her darn.—"What's in the wind, now, Pen?"

"I am in a pretty mess, Sally Hancock; what do you think Tom is about to do?"

"Is he going to marry our niece, Wycherly? Don't let him marry a cousin, Pen; bless you, don't let him marry a cousin."

"Marry a *cousin*, Sally! I wish it was no worse than marrying young Pen. He is going to bring me one of Lady Wetheral's dolls, and I have vowed not to see or speak to her."

"Hoot toot, you will think better of it," replied Mrs. Hancock, passing a stocking to her sister. "Do mend that for me—there's a hole in the heel, as big as my thumb. What's the matter with the Wetherals, Pen? They are very fine girls, and very well born."

"It is not *that*," returned Mrs. Pynsent, threading a needle, and taking up the proffered stocking. "If you knew the pains my lady took to hunt down Tom, you would bless yourself, Sally Hancock."

"Never mind, Pen. Didn't our mother do just the same by us? Didn't I marry Hancock, in spite of every thing people could say?—and didn't you declare you would have Bob Pynsent, though he was engaged to Patty Durham?"

"Sally Hancock, do you remember the Shrewsbury races?" cried Mrs. Pynsent, overpowered with laughing at some bygone recollections.

"When we dressed up to frighten Hancock and Pynsent? ay, don't I?" exclaimed her sister, equally amused. "Do you remember Hancock's face, when you told him his fortune?"

"And do you remember Pynsent saying—"

Mrs. Pynsent could no more. A thousand images of the past crowded before her vision, and both ladies laughed immoderately at certain remembrances conjured up by Mrs. Hancock, reverting to youthful indiscretions. Mrs. Pynsent's anger towards her son already waned, as she dwelt upon topics so consonant to her feel-

ings, with her sister. The *tête-à-tête* lasted a considerable time, and the peals of laughter continued, till the completion of the stocking gave warning it was time to part. Mrs. Pynsent prepared to move with reluctance.

"Can't you stay now you are here?" said Mrs. Hancock.

"Don't ask me, Sally Hancock. I must get back to Hatton. If you and Hancock had not spent your property in eating and drinking, you would not have been shut up here with that dreadful foot, which must be your death."

Mrs. Hancock exhibited her swelled foot.—"Yes, that's a neat article, Pen. I wish I could have it sawed off by the carpenter. Can't help it."

"Well, Sally Hancock, if Tom marries, you must come to the wedding;" remarked Mrs. Pynsent, in a doleful voice.

"My dear, how can I come with this foot? A pretty trinket, isn't it, to present before a bride?—There's a neat foot to trip among the bridesmaids to the altar!—I'm only fit for Lea, Pen, but you can tell me all about it."

Mrs. Pynsent drew up her face and eyes into a comic expression of astonishment, as she con-

for it. There's a hundred thousand pound
in that hovel of a shoe. Every farthing
into your stomachs. It was sure to t
you, some day."

"We can't eat our cake and have
served the jolly Mrs. Hancock; "but i
all spent in eating and drinking. Hanc
myself lost more than half at play. It d
go in eating and drinking, Pen. Poor H
was very violent when I was unlucky,
thought nothing about his own losses."

"You would have him, Sally Hancoc

"Well, I was as resolute as yourself
matter of Bob Pynsent, Pen; but all t
cherlys were a rum set — must, and wou
their own way. Give Tom credit for a
the family disorder, and pocket the affro

"How my lady will hector, and com

"Tell Tom I will congratulate him, if he will come and see me." Mrs. Hancock winked her eye.

"Tom never will come near you till you leave off your broad jokes, Sally Hancock. I wish you would not offend people in that way. I can't ask you among ladies and gentlemen."

"Lord, Pen, how can I leave off old habits at my time of life?" Mrs. Hancock put her finger to her eye and looked innocent.

"Then Bobby and Tom will never visit you, or allow me to ask you to Hatton for more than one day. That's all you get by old habits, Sally Hancock."

"Tom is mighty nice; I wouldn't give a farthing for such a nephew."

"I'll trouble you not to abuse Tom, Sally Hancock," cried her sister, who was touched on a most sensitive point by this remark. "Tom is always right, and his mother will always uphold him. You must have a very genteel dialect, when two gentlemen cannot sit in your society comfortably."

"When shall I see you again? don't be scolding, Pen; I'm not used to scolding, now poor Hancock is gone."

"I'll come to Lea, as soon as Tom's affairs

are settled, but never call Tom names before me, Sally Hancock; you know I cannot bear it. Tom shall marry too if he pleases, and no one shall offer an opinion against the match before *me*."

"Nor before me either," cried Mrs. Hancock.

"Before *you!* who ever comes before you, except myself?" asked Mrs. Pynsent, stopping short, as they were advancing towards the door, at which the pony-carriage was drawn up.

"Oh! Tomkins, the exciseman, comes for a bit of chat, and the old Ripley housekeeper has retired here, so I often hear the news. This is a very cheerful place."

"Don't frighten away the exciseman, Sally Hancock."

"Never fear, Pen; the exciseman is not made of such dainty materials as my nephew."

So ended the interview between the sisters; and Mrs. Pynsent returned to Hatton, resolved internally to support her son's wishes, and to offend any person who presumed to reflect upon his taking a "Wetheral."

CHAPTER VIII.

News of any trifling occurrence passes rapidly round a neighbourhood; but news of bridal import speeds with increased velocity through every department. It was soon known to every individual in the establishment, that Mr. Pynsent was accepted by Miss Wetheral, and in less than twenty-four hours the event was generally current in the higher circles of the Wetheral acquaintance. Separated as many mansions were from each other's observation by large intermediate property, it was wonderful how the intelligence could gain such powerful progress, yet it was publicly spoken of as an assured fact the following evening at Lady Spottiswoode's; and Lady Wetheral's extraordinary good fortune was canvassed in every particular.

Mrs. Pynsent's publicly-expressed disapprobation of a daughter-in-law from Wetheral, was commented upon with eagerness, and many

anxious friends of both parties looked with mingled curiosity and amusement to the effects likely to emanate from Hatton. Miss Wycherly consented to escort a party upon a congratulatory mission to her aunt Pynsent, and she undertook to drive Lady Spottiswoode and her daughter to Hatton, accompanied by the two Mr. Tyndals.

It was an evil day to Miss Wycherly. Ever since the eventful ball, which produced the present cause of her intended visit, Mr. Spottiswoode had never renewed the subject which she had treated so lightly, or sought her society, his once constant anxiety and invariable daily practice. Since that eventful ball, so happy in its results to one party, so gloomy in its termination to herself —since that night, when her rash spirits tempted her to jest with her lover's serious wish to understand her sentiments, had Mr. Spottiswoode been a stranger to Lidham; and most rashly had Miss Wycherly persevered in flirting with Mr. Henry Tyndal, to evince her indifference to Mr. Spottiswoode's prolonged absence, and to bring down upon herself, ultimately, the reproach of having given encouragement to Henry Tyndal ungenerously and dishonourably. Her present state of mind towards Mr. Spottiswoode was un-

changeable affection, such as it had ever felt towards him; and such as she felt assured must ever exist there, though her own lips had made a breach between them, by trifling with his long-expressed affection.

Miss Wycherly felt aware that she had drawn down upon herself the offended feelings of an injured man, who had borne all her caprice with patient endurance; she felt, too, that there was a point when that endurance must and would burst from its fetters, and assert its freedom. Mr. Spottiswoode's spirit might bear with a certain degree of flippancy; but he would not endure to become a woman's toy, to become a thing, which the woman he loved could dare to throw from her in caprice, and recal at will. Such, Miss Wycherly knew, was not the nature of *his* love, whom her heart pined to recover. But her pride—the pride of a woman unwilling to bend her spirit in acknowledgment of error—persisted in allowing Henry Tyndal to attend her in public; and its false reasoning forbade her to appear wounded by the consequences of her fault. Miss Wycherly could only trust to circumstances for assistance in developing the real intentions of her offended lover; and, in making an appointment with Lady Spottiswoode,

she trusted events might concur to restore her again into her son's favour, and dispel the cloud which separated them.

In this frame of mind, and with this hope, to spread flowers on her path, Miss Wycherly drove her four beautiful bays into Shrewsbury, and drew up before Lady Spottiswoode's house. Mr. Spottiswoode, accompanied by the Tyndals, appeared at the hall-door to receive her; and Mr. Spottiswoode politely, but with reserve of voice and manner, expressed Lady Spottiswoode's hope that she would take refreshment before they proceeded to Hatton. This was Miss Wycherly's first meeting with her lover, since the misunderstanding which had taken place at Lady Spottiswoode's ball; and her heart felt and sunk under the changed expression of his voice and manner. She gave her reins to the groom, and prepared to obey Lady Spottiswoode's request. Mr. Henry Tyndal went forward with his brother to offer their assistance, while Mr. Spottiswoode remained on the steps, as a person who conceived that all required attention on his part, was effected in the delivery of his mother's message. Miss Wycherly declined Mr. Henry Tyndal's offered hand, and reseated herself with feelings of mingled mortification and indignation.

Nothing now could persuade her to descend from the barouche-box.

"Have the goodness, Mr. Tyndal, to make my excuses to Lady Spottiswoode. I rarely quit my throne, when once exalted, and she will allow of my apology. Insist upon herself and Miss Spottiswoode taking their own time. I am not in any hurry."

It appeared as though Mr. Spottiswoode had cheerfully and for ever surrendered her to Mr. Tyndal's attentions, for he spoke in an undertone to the young men, and returned into the house.

"Very kind fellow," cried Henry Tyndal; "he has gone himself with your message, so I can stay and admire your set out, and yourself. Upon my soul, your habit sits beautifully, doesn't it, John?"

"I begged *you* to deliver my message," replied Miss Wycherly, offended and distressed at her lover's action. "I desired *you*, Mr. Tyndal, to deliver my message, not Mr. Spottiswoode."

Henry Tyndal misunderstood, and was flattered by Miss Wycherly's reproof. It was clear enough to his comprehension she was angry with Spottiswoode for presuming to take a mes-

sage which had been delegated to himself as her regular and encouraged attendant.

"Oh, well! never mind for once, Miss Wycherly; I thought Spottiswoode was very anxious to go, or he should not have taken my place, I promise you. No, no, poor fellow! he was off before I knew what he was about. Upon my soul, your horses are magnificent."

Miss Wycherly did not hear Mr. Tyndal's observation; her attention was given exclusively and painfully to the hall-door, which remained open.

Lady Spottiswoode and her daughter appeared.

"My dear Miss Wycherly, you are patience itself," exclaimed both ladies.

"I never descend from my altitude," replied Miss Wycherly; "but you look forsaken without a beau of some sort; if your son would like to take a seat, Lady Spottiswoode, there is one to spare."

"Charles said he meant to call at Hatton," said Miss Spottiswoode, "and I dare say it would really be an accommodation, unless this is the day he promised to ride over to the Farnboroughs. Mr. Tyndal, before you mount your horse, just tell Charles here is room for him, by

Miss Wycherly's permission — beg pardon for the trouble."

Mr. Henry Tyndal sprang from his horse, and proceeded to obey her request. Miss Wycherly gathered up the reins, but her hands trembled with anxious curiosity to ascertain the effect of the summons. Mr Henry Tyndal returned alone.

"Spottiswoode says he is going to Hatton, but he is engaged to ride there with the Farnborough party. It has been an appointment of some days' standing, he says, therefore he cannot come; here he is to answer for himself."

Mr. Charles Spottiswoode appeared equipped for riding, but he excused himself to Miss Wycherly with much politeness—a style of manner so wounding to its object, so unbearably irritating to a self-upbraiding, yet proud, spirit. The colour rose in Miss Wycherly's face.

"I am engaged to ride to Hatton with Lord Farnborough and his daughter," proceeded Mr. Spottiswoode: "Lady Anna commanded me to attend her some time ago, and her ladyship never fails her word, therefore I must not allow her to upbraid me with the most offensive of all failings, that of deceiving expectations. Sophy, you are all the colours of the rainbow."

"Never mind, Charles," replied Miss Spottiswoode, smiling good-naturedly at the remark; "if I mix pink and green too strongly for your taste, pray remonstrate with Lady Anna Herbert; she wears *three* colours; perhaps your opinion may have some weight with her. I am, you know, incorrigible."

"Will Lady Anna possess more sense than her sex?" asked Mr. Spottiswoode. "Will she relinquish three favourite tints to please?"

"To please *you*, Charles, I dare say Lady Anna would renounce her darling colours—purple, yellow, and green. Can my dear pink and green be half so *prononcée*? Miss Wycherly, do speak for me! Charles always upholds Lady Anna's frightful combination."

"I have not upheld Lady Anna, Sophy."

"Yes, you always do, Charles. Every thing is Lady Anna now."

Miss Wycherly's spirit could endure no more; she turned to Lady Spottiswoode.

"We are embarked in this undertaking, and time is precious. If Sophy has settled her interesting topic, may I proceed to Hatton? Mr. Tyndal, Mr. Henry Tyndal, you must not lose sight of us; shall we proceed?"

The lady was perfectly ready to resign the

conversation; the Mr. Tyndals were already mounted, and Mr. Spottiswoode bowed his adieu. Miss Wycherly would not appear mortified and unhappy; she returned her lover's salutation with a bow and smile, which equalled his own in apparent indifference; and the party were quickly on their road. Miss Wycherly, as charioteer, had full occupation for her attention, and she was silent during the drive: her heart was heavy; and the fear of having lost Spottiswoode's affection weighed down her spirits and produced a mortal sorrow. Such was the consequence of a fault persisted in, because a false pride could not endure to own its transgression! Such was the suffering produced by a heart resolute to lose the man beloved, ere it would bend to acknowledge its weakness!

Miss Wycherly forgot, in her own misery, the amusement she contemplated in observing her aunt Pynsent's conduct, when she received the visits of congratulation upon her son's intended marriage. In her misery, also, she did not immediately perceive Tom Pynsent and Miss Wetheral comfortably established in the Hatton drawing-room; or did she, for some moments, perceive the Ennismores and Julia also present; while Mr. Pynsent, smilingly and

in high spirits, was chatting in turn to the individuals composing the circle, and calling for the congratulations of each person upon the event in prospect.

Lady Spottiswoode gazed in astonishment at the sudden and powerful change: who could have surmised that the "empty, horrible Wetherals" were now to receive a thousand attentions and affectionate solicitudes from Mrs. Pynsent! — that "the bird from the Wetheral nest" was to be wooed to its gilded cage by all the gentle lures that Mrs. Pynsent could devise! — that sweet was henceforth to be bitter, and the bitter sweet! Lady Spottiswoode gazed, and gazed again.

"Well, you are all come to say pretty things to me," said Mrs. Pynsent, addressing the newly-arrived party, "and you are all moonstruck! — not a word from one of you: why, Pen, you are all of a heap! — Well, Tyndal lads, what have you to say?—here am I, full of bustle and happiness. Tom is going to get married at last, and he has made his old mother happy. We are all happy. I tell Bobby he ought to fall down and worship Miss Wetheral, for taking Tom—but here, just come this way, Lady Spottiswoode." Mrs. Pynsent lowered her voice.—

"I didn't much like the idea of a Wetheral, once, you remember; but that's all ended—we won't remember old grievances."

"Certainly not," replied her ladyship—"one has often reason to discard opinions."

"To be sure—can't be for ever harping upon one string." She turned to her niece.

"Why, you look as if you had lost your love. What's the matter, woman?—cheer up. Get a good husband, Pen; and don't pay these sort of visits with such a long face!"

Miss Wycherly could not command a portion of the ever-ready spirits which had never failed her before; her mind was too oppressed, even to make an effort. Her aunt's observations were unheard or unnoticed, as she turned towards her cousin Tom, who came up, red-faced and happy, to demand her felicitations.

"All right, at last, Cousin Pen: all fears and tribulations are over. There is nothing like fair dealing, and I have won a wife, after a devilish sharp run, though a short one. Now say something in your own fashion upon it, Cousin Pen; something, as Spottiswoode says of you, sharp, short, and sensible."

Miss Wycherly put her hand to her eyes, and, for a few moments, she made no reply.

Tom Pynsent believed the trembling of her hands proceeded from fatigue.

"I have told you, Cousin Pen, a woman should not drive four-in-hand; it's something out of reason. A pair is very pretty handling; but your little figure perched upon a box, with four horses, won't answer. Your hands are all in a shake, now."

"Let Pen alone, Tom," said Mrs. Pynsent. "My niece is a Wycherly, and the Wycherlys never gave in till they were fairly under ground."

"I am ill, aunt; very ill — a glass of water; any thing just to revive me; my heart is bursting." Miss Wycherly became unable to speak, and the company surrounded her, offering every species of condolence and remedy. A glass of water was procured, and the cold sparkling draught refreshed her. She felt that an effort must be made; and it was made under sickness of heart and prostration of mind, but the effort had a beneficial effect, for it roused the sufferer from a blighting sense of misery to the recollection of present events, and she was enabled to smile and speak to her cousin with some degree of coherence.

"Tom, I do wish you happy, and I suppose I am fatigued, for I have driven fourteen miles, but I never was so ill before."

"You are ill," observed Julia Wetheral, who had seated herself near Miss Wycherly: "it must be something extraordinary which could overpower *you*, Penelope. You must have felt fatigue in mind and body with those gay horses."

Miss Wycherly endeavoured to form a playful reply, but a flood of tears burst forth.

"Say nothing to me, now, Julia — let me be perfectly silent for a quarter of an hour, and I shall recover."

Every one returned to their former seats, except Julia, who remained silently at Miss Wycherly's side, and the company again resumed their interrupted conversation. Mrs. Pynsent had her private thoughts respecting her niece's sudden illness, which she whispered to Lady Ennismore.

"Pen is never ill, and never tired with driving — she would drive six-in-hand, and laugh at it. I hope Pen hasn't taken a fancy to Tom: my sister Hancock never could bear the idea of cousins marrying."

Lady Ennismore smiled graciously.—"You are more acute, Mrs. Pynsent, than myself: you have, no doubt, excellent reasons for your suppositions."

"Lord, I never suppose any thing, Lady

Ennismore, or see any thing till it's all over; only Pen's illness, just now, looks queer. If it was not about Tom, I can't imagine the cause of Pen's bit of a faint, just when she was to congratulate him upon his engagement! I am sure Pen never would faint about a trifle; and, as to her driving, it's all my eye: my brother Bill put her upon the coach-box as soon as she could walk."

"Perhaps it is mental agitation of another kind," softly remarked Lady Ennismore.

"Pooh, pooh!—Pen has no mental agitation, Lady Ennismore. What should ail her to faint about any thing, if it wasn't Tom's marriage? My sister Hancock had always a horror of their marrying, only I thought nothing about it.—How was I to fancy Pen liked Tom, when she was always with Charles Spottiswoode?"

Lady Ennismore appeared politely convinced, by her companion's reasoning, that Miss Wycherly's faintness proceeded from her cousin's insensibility to her attachment, when the door was thrown open to announce Lord Farnborough and Lady Anna Herbert. Miss Wycherly cast an eye of alarm towards the hall. Lord Farnborough stalked majestically forward with his daughter under his arm, and Mr. Spot-

tiswoode followed too surely in their train. She started up—"Julia, I cannot stay here; follow me into the library."

Both ladies disappeared during the little bustle of a fresh reception, and Lady Ennismore alone observed their rapid exit. Miss Wycherly closed the door of the library, to secure themselves from interruption or intrusion; she then took off her hat, and, seating herself at the library-table, she rested her head upon her hands, while the tears flowed copiously down her cheeks. "Julia," she said—"Julia, I cannot endure this; I have lost him, and my heart will break."

Julia sat down opposite her companion, and vainly offered consolation.

"Don't attempt to console me, Julia," sobbed poor Miss Wycherly.

"I am past all consolation. The creature has never visited Lidham since that abominable night at Lady Spottiswoode's, and now he is capering after Lady Anna Herbert. Oh, Julia, if you could comprehend the misery I feel!"

"My dear Penelope, you never confessed your fault to Charles Spottiswoode, I fear, by all this grief. Have you tried to see him, or written to him since your quarrel?"

The Wycherly blood rushed into the very forehead of Penelope. She raised her head and dashed away the tears.

"Who! *I* beg submissively for Spottiswoode's forgiveness! *I* meanly sue for pardon to a man who has been my slave till this Lady Anna has attracted him! *I* tell him to return to Lidham, because I cannot live without him! I'll die ten thousand deaths, before I will sully my lips in imploring pardon!"

"But, Penelope, you are not reduced to implore pardon," replied Julia, in soothing accents. "You are not advised to act in any way degrading to your feelings. Did you not trifle most ungenerously with Mr. Spottiswoode at your last meeting, and have you made one advance since that time, to prove to him you were in jest?"

Miss Wycherly again drooped her head upon her hands, as she replied—"He has given me no opportunity to do so, Julia: he has been ever since that evening devoted to the Farnboroughs."

"And you have been equally devoted to the Tyndals, Penelope. Have you not made Henry Tyndal your shadow?"

"A great spoony!" ejaculated Miss Wycherly.

"Put an end to all this," resumed Julia, "and give Mr. Spottiswoode reason to think you regret your unjust conduct; decline Henry Tyndal's constant attendance, and do not bring upon yourself the Court Herbert reproaches. You are encouraging Henry Tyndal, Penelope, and Mr. Spottiswoode must perceive it."

"I know I have done wrong, Julia, but every thing is gone too far; I cannot, cannot subject myself to Spottiswoode's scorn; he will never forgive me, and I will never bear the indignity of seeking a hopeless reconciliation. If I have suffered Henry Tyndal's attentions, *he* has sought Lady Anna Herbert. No, we are divided for ever!"

The idea of a final separation from her lover's affection, seemed to produce agony of mind too powerful to endure, for, Miss Wycherly, rising suddenly, seized Julia's hands, and gazed earnestly in her face.

"Julia Wetheral, I will act upon your advice, only tell me what to do, if any thing now can restore his heart; I am wretched enough to submit to any thing short of the degradation of seeking a man's extinguished affection! You will not wish me to do a wrong thing, Julia, therefore, think for me, and quiet my heart."

"I *will* tell you what to do, Penelope; return with me into the drawing-room; do not give your attention to Mr. Henry Tyndal, and do not appear so indifferent to a man you have driven from you with unkindness."

"Julia," replied Miss Wycherly, breathing hard, "I cannot bear to see Spottiswoode with another person. I cannot witness his attention to Lady Anna. I will remain here till *they* are gone, or I should die upon the spot. If you could understand my miserable feelings, you would pity me, and my own folly has produced them!"

Miss Wycherly walked about the library in great distress, which pierced her friend's heart to witness. She could only offer her sympathy, and urge her change of manners towards Mr. Tyndal. Grief produces many effects; on some minds the hand of sorrow falls heavily, yet it originates patience and gentleness; in others, it produces irritation and increased violence of temper. It was so with Miss Wycherly, whose spirit chafed at the remembrance of her own folly, and even attacked the prudent counsel of her friend.

"I tell you, Julia, I am ready to spurn the Tyndals from my sight; for who can despise

hem more than I do?—but it is useless to place efore me, so pertinaciously, my folly in having orne with them. I am well aware of my error, ithout requiring any one to heap my transgres-ions before my eyes at every turn. Reproach ever heals a wound."

"I do not speak in reproach, Penelope," replied Julia, in accents that overcame Miss Wycherly's quick temper; "I only point out the means to serve you, because you asked me to do so."

"Don't heed my words, Julia," exclaimed Miss Wycherly, continuing her restless walking up and down the library; "I speak in bitter misery, and know not what I say. Do not leave me, for I know you are kind, and not given to take offence, and I am almost maddened with vexation. Tell me what to do, Julia, and I swear to be guided by you."

"I repeat my words, then, Penelope. Return with me into the drawing-room; do not give Mr. Henry Tyndal all your attention, and bear with Mr. Spottiswoode's attention to Lady Anna: it will not last long."

"Oh, Julia!" sighed Miss Wycherly, "if I could but think you a true prophet — but I will do as you wish; I will try to bear the sight of

Lady Anna, but the idea gives me a shuddering fit. See how I tremble."

"You do tremble, Penelope, but a determined effort will subdue it."

Julia rubbed Miss Wycherly's hands, which were deadly cold, and replaced her hat, as the poor girl sat trembling, and incapable of assisting herself. Julia also smoothed the curls which fell in abundance upon her pale cheeks. "And now, Penelope, take my arm, and let us take one steady turn through the room, to try your powers."

Miss Wycherly took Julia's offered arm, and proceeded towards the door. "Let us go into the drawing-room at once," she said. "With you I have given way, because I am assured of your sympathy and secrecy; but to no other eye will I betray my repentance or my sorrow. I may look ill—I am ill—but no one shall say Penelope Wycherly pines for Charles Spottiswoode."

Miss Wycherly's sentiment operated at once upon her nerves and manners: no one could suppose she had just suffered a strong nervous attack, by the collected air of her entrance again into company. It was only the pallid complexion and calm demeanour, which betrayed

recent illness to her friends; and Mrs. Pynsent, satisfied that her niece could never struggle against her disappointment with Tom, offered her every little soothing attention, and even seated her where she could not observe her cousin, still conversing with Anna Maria: her chair was placed near the window, immediately opposite to Mr. Spottiswoode and Lady Anna Herbert.

"There, Pen, dear, air will refresh you; but you have driven too far, I dare say: there, look straight before you, and don't keep turning round."

Lady Anna Herbert made a very polite speech, hoping Miss Wycherly had not been seriously ill, and Miss Wycherly passed through the forms of recognition with her ladyship with great presence of mind. Mr. Spottiswoode slightly bowed; but he did not address her, or join in the short conversation which ensued between the ladies. Miss Wycherly became silent, and struggled visibly, to Julia's eye, for resolution to bear up through the scene. Lady Ennismore broke up the meeting by ordering her carriage, and then Miss Wycherly's situation became oppressive. Tom Pynsent came forward to his cousin with looks of interest. "Cousin Pen, I will drive your carriage home, for Miss Julia Wetheral

says you are not fit to hold the reins, and I think so too."

Lady Spottiswoode and her daughter entreated Miss Wycherly to suffer Mr. Pynsent to take her place, and renounce the idea of driving.

"The air will revive me," said Miss Wycherly, her lips quivering as she spoke. "I am fatigued, I believe, and I will gladly allow Tom to drive; but I cannot sit in the carriage: I must be in the air."

Mrs. Pynsent felt for her niece, and she resolved to prevent her suffering the distress of sitting a couple of hours by the side of Tom, who was now as good as married to Miss Wetheral. She applied to Mr. Spottiswoode.

"Here, Charley, can't you drive the ladies home? It's all in your way, you know, and quite out of Tom's. Suppose you drive your party into Shrewsbury, and Pen will drive herself on to Lidham; the distance is a trifle from Shrewsbury."

Mr. Spottiswoode expressed himself ready to undertake the office of coachman, if Miss Wycherly approved of his skill; Miss Wycherly caught at this one last opportunity of seeing and speaking to her lost lover: she rose from her chair, and reseated herself.—

"I shall be happy if you....yes." Not a word more could pass her lips, though she tried to articulate. Mr. Spottiswoode looked earnestly at her pale countenance, and appeared struck by her agitation. Mrs. Pynsent's heart was disturbed by her poor niece, Pen.

"That arrangement will do, boys. Tom, just shew Miss Wetheral the new picture in the study before she goes, and Charley, Miss Wycherly's groom, will ride your horse. I shall tell Bill Wycherly he ought to send the coachman with Pen, not a groom-fellow."

Lord Farnborough and his daughter rose to take leave. It appeared to Miss Wycherly's jealous eye, that Lady Anna spoke laughingly to Mr. Spottiswoode upon the subject of his new vocation, but she could not catch the words, or his reply: Lady Anna made her a passing bow as she joined Lord Farnborough, and they were gone when she passively sunk upon a sofa by Julia's side, exhausted with her efforts. "Julia, this day decides my destiny—I am weaker than a child."

Mr. Henry Tyndal approached them to express his regret at Miss Wycherly's fatigue: she closed her eyes, and turned from him in disgust, abruptly exclaiming—

"I wish to be quiet and alone, Mr. Tyndal."

"I am glad you are not going to drive back," persevered Henry Tyndal; "I dare say Spottiswoode will drive you very well; he is a very fair hand at the ribbons. I'm sure I would drive you with the greatest pleasure in the world, Miss Wycherly, but I am not a dab at driving. I am glad, however, I shall be riding by your carriage: you will ride inside, of course: I hope —I beg you will ride inside."

Miss Wycherly looked daggers at the man with whom she had been so intimate for many days, and whom she had allowed to be constantly in attendance.

"I require no one's opinion, Mr. Tyndal, to regulate my actions, and I shall be obliged by your removing from before me."

"I am afraid Miss Wycherly is very ill," said Henry Tyndal, looking inquisitively at Julia. "What can we do for her, Miss Wetheral?"

"Do, for Heaven's sake, leave me!" cried Miss Wycherly, losing all patience at his including himself in her arrangements; "I will not be annoyed by your obstinate stupidity."

"Stupidity, Miss Wetheral! Now what can Miss Wycherly mean by stupidity, when I am so fearful about her driving home?"

Julia saw her friend's complexion reviving, and her eye lighting up with a thousand fires: in another moment, a torrent must overwhelm the unfortunate Henry Tyndal; but, as if to prove his utter blindness, he placed his own foot upon the precipice by offering to take her hand. Miss Wycherly felt the extent of her imprudence, in suffering the attendance of a man whom she never intended to marry, by its effects; but reason, at that moment, did not inform her impatient spirit that the fault was hers alone. All suggestions of reason were overpowered by anger, for Charles Spottiswoode's eyes were upon her, and he had witnessed the action. Miss Wycherly pushed Henry Tyndal's hand away, and rose from her seat, as she replied, with great impetuosity,

"If you ever presume to approach me with familiarity, I will tell you how I abhor the insolence, and resent the affront. How dare you attempt to touch me, Mr. Tyndal?"

Mr. Tyndal was offended, but he never imagined insult and insolence could be implied in his well-intentioned movement: he, therefore, stood silent and sulky for a few moments. Miss Wycherly passed him, and took her station between Lady Spottiswoode and her aunt. Mrs. Pynsent was pleased to perceive her son still

absent, and her anxiety was sincere, in endeavouring to get her niece away from Hatton, and in preventing Tom's reappearance: she was sure Sally Hancock would think with her that, when once Tom was married, Pen would think no more of the matter. Lady Ennismore's departure destroyed all her intended plans for Penelope's peace of mind; for Miss Wetheral was recalled from contemplating the new picture, and where her fairy footsteps led, there followed Tom Pynsent. It was in vain that Mrs. Pynsent bustled round her niece, and recommended her to Mr. Spottiswoode's care; Tom's first step was to bring Anna Maria up to his cousin.

"We have hardly spoken together, have we, Pen, in this confounded bustle? but here's my little wife, come to ask how you are, and to say you must always be glad to see us at Lidham, when you set up with you know who." Tom looked knowingly at Henry Tyndal.

"We have ever been good friends, Penelope, and a closer connexion shall not disunite us," said Anna Maria, as they shook hands. Tom Pynsent, infinitely too happy to remain stationary, walked away with his prize, and Miss Wycherly remained with the Spottiswoodes. Mr. Charles Spottiswoode was giving all his

attention to some coloured prints on hunting subjects, when Mrs. Pynsent summoned him.

"Here, Charley, your party are waiting for you, and you are sitting dumb-founded, like a lover bewitched. Pen, who do you suppose Charley is thinking of? Who is a long way on her road to Farnborough Stacey, Charley?"

Mr. Spottiswoode hastily put away the prints; and Miss Wycherly was fast sinking into the depression which follows effort of any kind, when Tom Pynsent returned, in high feather, from assisting the Wetheral party into their carriage. He flew to Miss Wycherly.

"Cousin Pen, my little wife commands me to dine at Wetheral to-day, so I shall see you properly packed up under Spottiswoode's care: very good thing Spottiswoode was here, or I should have driven you home in a towering passion for standing in my way. Come this way, Pen, my little wife sends you a message, and so does her sister: I must tell them as a profound secret."

"You be hanged, Tom, with your secret!" said his mother, "and do not keep Pen from her party."

Tom Pynsent dragged Miss Wycherly into the large bay-window, in spite of opposition.

"I don't understand ladies' ways just yet, Pen, but I am ordered to say these words from

my little wife, 'Be firm;' and her sister de
me to say, 'All things must end well, if pati
Now the devil a bit can I make out any mea
from either sentence, can you?"

"Yes, I understand, Tom; and tell them
evening for answer, 'Amen.'"

"You are all a parcel of riddles, Pen; v
has 'amen' to do with your affairs. I say, l
what's all this with Spottiswoode?"

Miss Wycherly tried to answer her cou
question lightly, but she burst into tears.

"Oh, ho, that's it, Pen, is it?" Tom P
sent pronounced the words slowly, as if awak
to some new idea gradually. "All must
well, be firm, and amen. I see something
by Jove."

His cousin made no reply, but the t
coursed down her cheeks. Tom Pynsent
sorry for her, and he put his arm round
waist, to suit the action to the word.

"Never mind, Pen; if you've quarrel
touch your swain up with a bit of sugarca
as you go to Shrewsbury. Pitch it in smoot
Pen, and Spottiswoode will turn like the
flower. Don't cry, cousin Pen, it makes
dismal—d—n it, don't cry!"

Mrs. Pynsent underwent considerable anx

the *tête-à-tête*, but, when her son became
, her interference became imperative.
ommy, what are you squeezing your cousin
about, when you are nearly married;
are ill-bred things, Master Tommy."
s Wycherly's distress became apparent,
e threw open the window; her cousin
umouredly and awkwardly endeavoured
ceal her from observation, by pointing out
auties of the view.
here, Pen, are the trees I spoke of, (clear
I dry your eyes, Pen) and my father talks
nting upon that hill, (don't let any one
you are down in the mouth, Pen). I
I like it best as it now stands. Spottis-
, Tyndal, give me your opinion."
e gentlemen were soon engaged in dispu-
he propriety of planting, or not planting a
vell in the park, each arguing upon their
ns, enabling Miss Wycherly to recover
degree of composure; and, when her well-
ited equipage drove to the door, she was
o perform her adieus with tolerable calm-
Tom Pynsent offered his arm to Lady
iswoode.
Now, my lady, three gentlemen can't cut
selves down into two, so I shall take charge

of you, while they fight for your daughter and Pen."

Mr. Spottiswoode stood irresolute for an instant, but the Mr. Tyndals took possession of Miss Spottiswoode; neither of those gentlemen approached Miss Wycherly. Mr. Spottiswoode was, of course, under the necessity of leading her to the carriage, but it took place in profound silence. Tom Pynsent, now awake to his cousin's state of mind, managed every thing for her.

"There, ladies, you are comfortable. Pen, let me place *you* comfortably upon your throne."

Mrs. Pynsent screamed from the drawing-room window, "I say, Tom, put Pen inside!"

Tom Pynsent, however, seated his cousin safely on the "throne," as she had always designated the coach-box, and Mr. Spottiswoode took his seat by her side; the Mr. Tyndals also mounted their horses, and rode away.

Mr. Spottiswoode paused to admit of Tom Pynsent's careful arrangement of his cousin's box-cloak, but Mrs. Pynsent again screamed from the window:—

"I say, Tom, you'll be too late for Wetheral!"

Tom Pynsent noticed his mother's exclama-

tions by a sharp movement of the elbow, and remained till he had adjusted every thing with precision. He then shook his cousin's hand forcibly, and descended upon the steps of the door. "All's right, Spottiswoode."

The carriage was soon lost behind the knoll, which had been the subject of dispute.

The Mr. Tyndals appeared no more by the side of the carriage, and a long silence was broken by a remark from Mr. Spottiswoode.

"I wonder we see nothing of the Tyndals."

Miss Wycherly answered, half hesitating, "I believe I have offended Mr. Henry Tyndal."

"That is to be regretted," was Mr. Spottiswoode's reply, and a second silence ensued; the remainder of the drive was passed without a word on either side. Lady Spottiswoode urged Miss Wycherly to remain with them and dine; but Penelope's heart was too ill at ease to accept her hospitality. Her pallid countenance and hurried voice pleading excuses, spoke more powerfully than words could do, and her friends forbore to press her compliance. Mr. Spottiswoode still held the reins, and evinced no intention to quit the box. Miss Wycherly dared not meet his eye, as she thanked him for the trouble he had taken.

"You must not return thanks yet, for my task is not ended," replied Mr. Spottiswoode, "I shall drive you safely to Lidham."

"Pray—not for the world!" exclaimed Miss Wycherly, fixing her eyes upon her companion, in the energy of speaking; Mr. Spottiswoode's face wore a mild expression, and a smile quivered on his lip, but it fled at her exclamation, and his manner resumed its reserve. She remembered Julia's charge to be gentle; she remembered her cousin's charge to "pitch it in smoothly;" she saw also Mr. Henry Tyndal walking his horse in the distance.

"Yes, yes, Charles Spottiswoode, drive on, and drive fast—don't wait for any one!"

"Not for Tyndal?" asked Mr. Spottiswoode, provokingly.

"Not for a human being—drive on, I beseech you!"

Mr. Spottiswoode obeyed, and the carriage proceeded with rapidity in the direction of Lidham.

Three miles were traversed, and Lidham rose among its woods in grandeur, ere Miss Wycherly attempted to speak; she had taxed her memory to bring forward some topic of conversation, but it played her false; she had awaited a

remark from her companion, upon which to ground her intended kindness, and it had not reached her ear—her heart now pined to recover its former ease and happiness, yet no opportunity offered to attempt the resumption. To begin the subject voluntarily, was a thought which fled at its very birth. What! own herself in the wrong, and apologize for having given pain to a worthy heart? Ask for pardon, when she had insulted a human being in the dearest feelings? and, when her spirit longed to be at peace with her lover, full of its own injustice and wrong? forbid it, womanly dignity!

Mr. Spottiswoode passed through the lodge at Lidham, and yet Miss Wycherly persevered in her silence; no matter, Mr. Wycherly was in sight, and the hour was past for repentance; she must henceforth submit to bear a gnawing and unpitied remorse for her levity of conduct, and for the knowledge that she had thrown away the very opportunity she had coveted, to try her power upon her lover's forgiveness. To her "dignity" she must sacrifice an ingenuous confession of sorrow for an error, heartless as it was uncalled for; and the demands of "dignity" superseded the claim of right. So do women often create their own misery, by daring to

offend, yet quailing under the degradation of s
voking an ungenerous speech.

Mr. Wycherly returned to the house, a
was ready to receive his daughter and Mr. Sp
tiswoode when they drove up in his usual wa
It never occurred to him that the somewhat lo
absence of the latter from Lidham was a s
prognostic of a misunderstanding between th
parties most interested in the visits.

"Why, Spottiswoode, you are a truant, b
Pen has caught you at last, I see. She and I
thought you were gone for ever, but I'm glad t
see you, however." Mr. Wycherly handed his
daughter from the barouche-box. "Well, now,
come down, for dinner has been ready this half-
hour; down with you, my good fellow."

Mr. Spottiswoode declined staying dinner;
he would take his own horse, and return to
Shrewsbury.

"My good fellow, what's the matter with you?
you won't think of losing your dinner? Non-
sense, my dear sir; stay and take your dinner,
and go home afterwards, if you like. Here,
Pen, try your eloquence."

But Miss Wycherly had flown in sorrow and
anger to her own room. Mr. Spottiswoode
perceived her departure, and it decided his own;

he could not be prevailed upon to defer his ride home till the evening. It was evident Miss Wycherly got out of his way, and her manner towards him was offensive; he could not think of remaining at Lidham, to subject himself to repeated annoyances; Mr. Wycherly pressed in vain.

"Well, Spottiswoode, you are determined, so I can't help it; but I think there is something in the wind."

"I am returning to my mother's house," replied Mr. Spottiswoode, as he shook hands.

"Give my compliments," said Mr. Wycherly, "and tell her I say you are an obstinate mule."

CHAPTER IX.

Miss Wycherly began to lose all hope of recovering her position in Mr. Spottiswoode's heart, unless she could prevail upon herself to make the *amende honorable;* and to that wretched alternative her mind would not bend. Rather would she endure the horrible idea of losing him; rather would she suffer the pangs of jealousy to distract her heart, than "bow down" before him she had offended, or say one word which could lead him to suppose she retracted her offensive coquetry. For some days her spirit chafed in solitude and in silence, and Julia received the following note, a week subsequent to their meeting at Hatton.

"For Heaven's sake, Julia, come to me for one hour, and leave Lord Ennismore behind! Don't bring him to Lidham, for I hate the sight and sound of lovers; come alone, and listen to the woes of poor

"PENELOPE WYCHERLY."

Julia attended her summons, but Lord Ennis-re did not remain behind; he attended his ther and his intended bride in the carriage, d Lady Ennismore deposited Julia at Lidham, mising to call for her on their return from rewsbury. Julia found her friend pale and with watching and fretting; Miss Wycherly ceived her with open arms.

"Oh, Julia, if you knew what I have suffered e we met last, you would pity me! I am so you are come to me without your over-rs!"

"Who are my overseers?" asked Julia, laugh-g at the term.

"You know I must mean the Ennismores, lia: you are never to be seen without mother son. Sit down, my dear, and hear my plaint."

Miss Wycherly gave Julia an exact and long tement of all that had taken place since they d met at Hatton, and her voice became itated as she dwelt upon Mr. Spottiswoode's ence during the drive, and his apparent deter-nation not to give her an opportunity to ex-ress her feelings. "This, Julia, was the most cruel part of his conduct," she continued. "How can a woman advocate her cause, when

a man is resolved to be silent? I may have acted wrong in the beginning, but the blame rests with him now. I have only to be wretched all my life, and shut myself up at Lidham."

Tears rushed to her eyes, but she struggled to subdue all appearance of emotion. Julia was preparing to speak, but a wave of the hand deterred her.

"Let me say all I have to say, Julia, and then applaud or blame me as you please. If I was foolish to show caprice and folly at that critical moment, Spottiswoode has exhibited cruelty and ill-temper ever since. He knew I meant to accept him some time or other, and he was needlessly hasty in acting so violently and promptly upon a nonsensical speech of mine. Suppose every man was to fly away at a woman's playfulness? I assure you, Julia, I was very ill when I came from Hatton; and yet the ill-natured creature has not inquired after me. I think you cannot uphold such a display of temper."

"I uphold Mr. Spottiswoode," replied Julia, "upon many points, and I cannot flatter you, Penelope, by saying you have done right in one particular."

"Julia!" exclaimed Miss Wycherly, "never

desert a friend in distress, or take a man's part against her!"

"I am giving you my opinion, Penelope, and Mr. Spottiswoode will never hear the substance of our conversation from myself. You have vexed and offended him; you have flirted very publicly with Henry Tyndal; and you have allowed Mr. Spottiswoode to imagine you have refused himself, after allowing his attentions for years—oh, Penelope, from your very childhood."

Miss Wycherly coloured, and her tears began to flow, but she made no reply. Her friend continued:—

"A woman may teaze a man who is comparatively a stranger to her, and she may believe herself making trial of his temper and affection; but Mr. Spottiswoode has been born and educated amongst us, and his attachment has been too well known to the neighbourhood, and to yourself, to doubt its truth. Do you doubt his affection, Penelope?"

Miss Wycherly shook her head, but she did not trust herself to speak.

"Then why treat him with levity, and throw him into Lady Anna Herbert's power?"

"Good heavens, Julia!" shrieked Miss Wycherly, as she started up from her seat, "do you

know that for a certainty? Is he positively thinking of Lady Anna; positively leaving me for ever? Oh! don't in mercy tell me so!"

"I do not think it, Penelope, because I know he has loved you too long to care for another; but you have been very unkind, and it has broken the bond of esteem between you. Take care how you draw the reins too tightly, and lose him past all recovery."

"Oh, if you are my friend, Julia," cried Miss Wycherly, kneeling before her in agony — "if you have any love for your playfellow in youth, and your friend since we grew up together, act for me in this strait, and return me Spottiswoode's love."

"Then dismiss Henry Tyndal from your constant society, Penelope."

"Too happy to do so, Julia!"

"Let Mr. Spottiswoode see by your conduct and manners, that you regret having pained him, Penelope."

"Alas! he will never give me an opportunity, Julia."

"Then make one, Penelope. If you love him as truly as you say you do, he is worth the sacrifice of an ill-judged pride. You have

offended him; express your regrets courageously, and recover his esteem."

"I should die before the words could be spoken, Julia," said her friend, rising from her attitude of humility, and reseating herself.—"I should die while I was confessing my sorrow. Don't ask me to acknowledge error; it would be a bitter task, and I never can sue for a husband —no, that I never, never can do."

"My dear Penelope....."

"Think of any other way, Julia, but not that dreadfully degrading task of imploring pardon—of bowing down before an offended lover! I should never again be able to assert my power!"

"We see things very differently, Penelope. Remember the extremely keen feelings of Mr. Spottiswoode, and the pain he has suffered in your flirtation with Henry Tyndal!"

"He has brought it upon himself."

"And you are content to resign Mr. Spottiswoode for the indulgence of false pride, Penelope—to lose the affection of a kind, constant lover, because you cannot condescend to say you were wrong! Then Lady Anna will be a happy woman if she can succeed you."

"You drive me wild with naming Lady Anna!" cried Miss Wycherly. "No one shall

succeed me in Charles Spottiswoode's heart, or I'll not stay at Lidham to see it. I believe I am proud, Julia, too proud for my peace of mind, but I shall never conquer it; it will drive me to my grave."

"Struggle against such an ignoble passion, Penelope."

Mr. Wycherly's voice resounded through the hall, calling for his daughter. "I say Pen!—here! halloo, Pen!"

"I cannot meet him with these red eyes," hastily observed Miss Wycherly. "My dear dear Julia, do speak for me!"

Julia joined Mr. Wycherly in the hall, who politely apologised for his vociferation; he was not aware of her presence at Lidham; he was only calling on Pen, to order some bread and cheese for Spottiswoode, and one or two hungry dogs, who would not dismount; but the servants were gone for the refreshments, and he would not detain her, or tease Pen, who was any thing but well.

"If Mr. Spottiswoode is at the hall-door, I should like much to see him for a few moments," was Julia's observation.

"He is here, and Tyndal, father and son. I can't get any of them to dismount; when they

see you, Miss Julia, one or two may change their mind, and prefer eating in-doors. I'll tell Spottiswoode you are here; or if you take my arm and show yourself, the effect will be greater."

Julia accompanied Mr. Wycherly to the door, and, after a few general compliments had passed, she addressed herself particularly to Mr. Spottiswoode, in a low voice.

"Mr. Spottiswoode, I wish to speak with you; can you leave your party?"

"Certainly; I shall feel honoured by any command from you." Mr. Spottiswoode dismounted, and gave his horse to one of the Lidham grooms.

"There!" cried Mr. Wycherly. "I told you so, Miss Julia, I told you what would happen, didn't I? Tyndal is good for nothing, but his son will follow the lead."

It was Mr. John Tyndal who accompanied his father, and they were not able to accept the tempting invitation—"they would just take a hurried snack upon their horses, and proceed; would Wycherly join them?"

"And leave Spottiswoode to the ladies' care?"

"To be sure; Spottiswoode was a lady's man, and they were always petted animals."

"Well, Miss Julia," said Mr. Wycherly, "I

give Spottiswoode into your hands, and you are responsible for consequences. Pen and you will entertain him as long as he behaves well."

Julia promised to be his guardian angel, and she proceeded with Mr. Spottiswoode to the sitting-room, where Miss Wycherly was lying extended upon the sofa, thoughtful and hopeless of ever seeing happy days again, if they were to be purchased by her own submission. She rose slowly as the door opened.

"What a time you have been flirting with papa, Julia!" she exclaimed, reproachfully. At that moment she perceived Mr. Spottiswoode, and a cry of surprise burst from her lips, but she did not advance to receive him. Mr. Spottiswoode stood near the door, and, resenting the coldness of his reception, he spoke only to Julia.

"Miss Wetheral, you wished to speak with me; may I beg the favour of your communication?"

"It is comprised in few words, Mr. Spottiswoode. My friend Penelope is distressed and grieved at having given you unprovoked offence, and she pines to recover your esteem."

"No—no—it is not true!" shrieked Miss Wycherly, hiding her face among the sofa pillows.

"Mr. Spottiswoode," continued Julia, "you are both unhappy, and this misunderstanding will never end without the assistance of a mutual friend. I now tell you, Penelope regrets her error, but fears to lessen herself in your opinion, by doing justice to herself and you. She is miserable at having quarrelled, and why should you not know it, and be friends?"

"By my soul, Penelope, I forgive the pain you have caused me," said Mr. Spottiswoode, approaching her, "if I may indeed believe you repent your unkind treatment."

Miss Wycherly shrunk from his touch as her lover offered to take her hand.

"I do not repent — I regret nothing — oh, Julia! was this kind to betray me! I will never believe you could love me, and yet have done this!" She rose to fly from the room, but Mr. Spottiswoode's arm, gently wound round her waist, arrested her flight.

"Stay, Penelope, and tell me why you avoid a man who loves you, and has borne what I have done for you? Tell me why you fear to say a kind thing, when it may balance a thousand harsh ones? Why must you distress a heart which never gave *you* uneasiness?"

"You have made me uneasy enough with

your attention to Lady Anna," replied Miss Wycherly, earnestly, yet not attempting to disengage herself.

"Do you seriously mean that, Penelope?" said Mr. Spottiswoode, looking inquiringly into her face.

"Yes, I do: your flirtation there was worse than mine with Henry Tyndal; every body knew *he* was not cared for, but *you* were abominable."

"Look me in the face, Penelope, and say that again if you dare."

Miss Wycherly did not repeat the accusation: how could she? Her lover held her to his heart, and every disquieting thought was stilled. She turned to Julia, and held out her hand.

"Julia, I will never forget that you brought about this reconciliation. I was too proud to own myself in fault, and had you not interfered, we should never have met again in harmony. I was agonised at first with anger, but it is past now; and, for Heaven's sake, don't let us quarrel again, Charles Spottiswoode!"

"Then you will have me without another interview with Captain Jekyl, Penelope?"

"Don't remember all that nonsense."

"I will not. Miss Wetheral, I am deeply obliged to you for your spirited and friendly conduct to us both. Had it not been for your intervention, I should not have entered Lidham again. Our mutual obligations, Penelope, are great to this excellent friend."

"When Julia wants a home or a friend, she will remember Lidham, Charles."

"Thank you," said Julia, smiling; "should such a time ever arrive, I will appear before you, to seek my home of rest."

Lady Ennismore's carriage was announced, and Julia rose to depart. "I have done an action which will always give me pleasure to contemplate," she said, as she shook hands with the reconciled pair. "I have linked the chain round my two friends, and it shall not break again. Penelope, I bespeak you upon a certain occasion; you must follow me to the altar when my hour comes."

"I will follow you to the death, my dear," replied her friend, "to the altar, to wealth, to misery, or the grave."

"Nay, only to the altar, Penelope; I will give you due notice."

Mr. Spottiswoode led her to the carriage, and repeated his acknowledgments. Lord Ennis-

more received her, and Julia left Lydham again, in company with those whom Miss Wycherly termed her overseers.

Wetheral Castle was now the scene of considerable bustle and gaiety. Lady Wetheral was destined, apparently, to succeed in every wish of her heart, for she had arranged and contrived to execute her plan of marrying both daughters on the same day. The Boscawens were invited to attend their nuptials; and Lady Ennismore, Mrs. Pynsent, and Lady Wetheral, united in wishing the day to be an early one. Lady Ennismore spoke in terms of elegant compliment, and expressed her maternal anxiety to see her son happily settled ere she retired to her seat in Lincolnshire; but Mrs. Pynsent did not attempt to press flowers of eloquence into her oratory.

"Here, let's have no dawdling, but let Tom get married; what's the use of kicking our heels here doing nothing? I'm for setting smartly to work, and naming a day. Come, this day three weeks I'll say, and Tom will back me."

Lady Wetheral saw every thing could safely be left to Mrs. Pynsent's care, as far as the time was concerned; she, therefore, gave her attention to ornamental attire, and complimented

Mrs. Pynsent by placing the day at her disposal. Mrs. Pynsent decided at once.

"Well then, I say this day three weeks, and no putting off."

From that hour, all was movement and consultation: Lady Ennismore and her son returned to Bedinfield to prepare for the bride's reception, and they were to reappear at Wetheral the week of the nuptials. Every body was to be congregated at Wetheral on the Monday preceding the ceremony, but the Boscawens were to spend a fortnight there, as Isabel would enjoy the sight of bridal finery.

Lady Wetheral received Isabel with all the honours due to her position in society. Anna Maria and Julia's future exaltation must place them beyond Isabel in pomp and circumstance; but still Mrs. Boscawen held a decided station, and she was mistress of Brierly. Mrs. Boscawen was therefore received at Wetheral with much ceremony and polite welcome. Isabel, however, returned to her early home a changed being: the light-hearted girl who had quitted Wetheral scarcely a twelvemonth, in smiles and joyous anticipations, returned a matron in appearance, grave and subdued in manner, and apparently frightened into stillness by her husband's stern

observation. She was no longer the sprightly, happy, madcap Isabel Wetheral; her laugh had fled, and even the smiles which used to pass in rapid succession over her bright face, stole now upon her lips slow and seldom. Her mother complimented Isabel upon the change so rapid and so complete.

"I am never weary admiring you, my dear Mrs. Boscawen; and I little imagined my romping daughter would be so soon transferred into an elegant, quiet matron. Your manners are quite perfect, my love."

A placid smile curled the lip of Isabel at this compliment.

"I am very quiet now, I believe; Mr. Boscawen dislikes laughing."

"It is not an accomplishment," said Lady Wetheral; "every common creature can laugh. I believe the loudest laughter is considered the pleasantest person among the commonality. I detest a laugher."

"I enjoyed laughing extremely," replied Isabel, with a sigh. "I should like to laugh again, but there is nothing laughable at Brierly. Mr. Boscawen does not like young people staying in the house, and I have mixed entirely among old people since I married."

"Your situation, my love! Mr. Boscawen is anxious to keep you quiet, I dare say."

"I should prefer having a friend or two with me to enliven Brierly," returned Isabel, gravely. "Mr. Boscawen liked to see me merry before we married, but now he says it is wrong. I think my sisters are foolish to marry. Anna Maria, you had better remain single, for Mr. Boscawen says young married women should not appear lively and ready to chat with gentlemen, and you know we chatted away here."

"Mr. Boscawen is elderly, my love; elderly gentlemen are very particular," observed Lady Wetheral, soothingly.

"Old or young, they are much the same, I believe; my jokes amused Mr. Boscawen extremely till I married. Papa always liked to see me happy, too; Mr. Boscawen's sister, Tabitha, reads such lectures if I laugh! I don't like her at all."

"I think you look extremely handsome and well, Mrs. Boscawen. Matrimony has improved you—confinement in two months time, you say? I wish I could offer you my assistance, my love; but you know what a poor nervous creature I am."

"Mr. Boscawen says I am only to have his sister Tabitha with me."

"An excellent arrangement, my love. Miss

Tabitha will not have the anxiety which would make *me* worse than useless. I dare say she is a steady sort of person."

"I don't like her at all, mamma; I would rather have you at Brierly."

"Me, my love! Oh, no! I am too nervous, not half so fitted for the department of nurse as good Miss Tabitha. Those old maids, you know, are calm and useful in their ignorance. I should be nervous, and make you so; Boscawen has arranged very prudently."

Isabel privately confessed to her sisters that if she had only suspected what her matrimony was to end in, nothing should have induced her to marry. That beautiful cloak with the leopard's claw had been of no use; not once had she occasion to wear it. Boscawen made her read history for some hours every day, which she forgot as soon as she closed the books; then Boscawen worried her with lessons of geography, and expected her to understand accounts, and comprehend housekeeping—a thing she detested; perhaps when she became a mother, she might have more power, but at present she was neither more nor less than a girl at school.

Isabel took great notice of Christobelle; and while her elder sisters were absorbed in preparation for their approaching nuptials, she was

r companion at all hours; and she loved to e her youngest sister constantly at her side. r. Boscawen freely indulged his lady in her e for Christobelle's society, and expressed him- lf pleased by her selection.

"I can have no objection, Isabel, to your ngest sister being with you, and if you can tain your father's consent, you can take her Brierly. I like her turn for reading; you read together. I do not wish you to be ed up with the foolish preparations going on ng your sisters and mother — jewels and es, all nonsense. I wish you to attend par- ularly to history, that you may not be wanting necessary information; and I expect your rnings will be devoted to study, as usual. ur youngest sister can be with you, and your dies may proceed together."

"I thought this fortnight was to be a holiday, r. Boscawen," said Isabel, mournfully.

"My dear Isabel, you have much to make up, d at your age much is acquired. I was dis- essed at hearing you assert to my sister a short ime since, that you could reach France by land."

"Well, Mr. Boscawen, I did not know to the contrary."

"But you ought to know, my dear Isabel;

an ignorant woman at the head of a man's table is terrible. I am continually watching to repair your blunders."

"I made no blunders before I married, Mr. Boscawen."

Mr. Boscawen gave a grim smile at Isabel's assertion, and patted her shoulder with kind feeling.

"Yes, you did, and those blunders amused me; but, my dear Isabel, a lover is charmed with faults and blunders, which make a husband miserable, so read and improve yourself in knowledge. Chrystal is the best companion for you at \\ etheral." In consequence of Mr. Boscawen's wish, Isabel and Christobelle studied together, and the child of ten years of age was even better acquainted with the elements of knowledge than the woman of eighteen. Isabel had an insuperable objection to study of any kind, and when Mr. Boscawen left the sisters together for an hour, Isabel quitted her dull history to seize upon Christobelle's little collection of story-books, or else she vented her disappointed feelings in warning her never to marry at all, but particularly an old man. It was all vanity and vexation of spirit; she had never seen company at Brierly; and Mr. Boscawen determined to re-

ceive none till she could conduct her own establishment; that time would never arrive, for she never could order any thing but mutton-chops and mashed potatoes. And Miss Tabitha scolded and lectured in vain. However, Mr. Boscawen said she might have Christobelle with her, and that was a blessing; for when she came, she might get out a little more.

Such was Isabel's course of life, after marrying precisely to have uncontrolled liberty, to ride all day in the gig, and fill Brierly as full as it could hold.

Tom Pynsent was very indignant at Isabel's mode of life. "What the devil did a man marry for, if a wife was only to be turned into a daughter? and what was a woman the better for having her head crammed with knowledge. For his part, he hoped Anna Maria could not tell great A from a bull's foot, and she would get no teaching at Hatton."

Mr. Boscawen persevered in his system, and only smiled grimly at the observations which were showered in his presence. No sort of excuse, no little morning gaiety, was allowed to prevail with him in liberating his wife from her course of study. Till four in the afternoon, Isabel was toiling at the arts and sciences; and

at that hour her husband took her an airing in the carriage which had so delighted her sight on her wedding-day: — she called it now her prison-house.

Mr. Boscawen's system of education, however unpalatable it proved to Isabel's taste, was one of gentleness, and of great importance to her mind. He was never harsh in his observations, and he bore with great patience his young wife's disinclination to improve her resources. Nothing could be more agreeably explained than Mr. Boscawen's views upon every subject. He imparted instruction so mildly, and varied his course of studies so insinuatingly, that the mornings flew past in really instructive yet pleasing pursuits.

At Christobelle's young age, she delighted in Mr. Boscawen's gentle administration, and no one ever before had power to withdraw her from her father's study. During Isabel's visit, Christobelle lived in her dressing-room; and when Mr. Boscawen walked out, Christobelle hovered round him, and listened to his kindly-expressed sentiments upon every trifle which she offered to his notice. Mr. Boscawen possessed but two failings; he had a most repulsive expression of countenance; and he married a young, laughing

girl, hardly out of the nursery, who could not appreciate his extensive knowledge, and who could never prove the companion his intellectual taste coveted. Caught by the vivacity and beauty of a sprightly girl, he had vainly promised himself pleasure in superintending her education, and in leading her talents towards the stores which learning could bestow: mortification was the result of his anxiety.

Mr. Boscawen was not the first wise man who fell in love, and fancied he could make a young creature happy, by endeavouring to raise her capacity to his own level. Many have tried the experiment and failed, because they would not believe the sparkling eye could emanate from gay spirits unconnected with scope of intellect, and because they expected that age and gravity could assimilate with youthful feelings and youthful views. Isabel was not adapted to the sameness of her life at Brierly: had she married a man more suited to her time of life, her joyous spirit would have met the cares of this world with lightheartedness and in smiles; but the awful countenance of her husband ever resting upon her — his perpetual anxiety respecting her manners— his remarks, so gentle yet so sternly spoken—all

pressed upon her mind, and weighed down her spirits.

Whenever Isabel spoke, her eye rested with alarm upon Mr. Boscawen; and it was evident she had been tutored into some degree of caution, by the unwearied lectures of Miss Tabitha Boscawen, upon the necessity of married ladies thinking before they spoke upon any subject. Lady Wetheral was enthusiastic in her praise of Isabel's improved appearance and manner, but her sisters and Miss Wycherly mourned over the change which had taken place. Miss Wycherly spoke openly her opinion.

"I declare, and I always did declare, it was a sinful act to give Isabel to that lanky, dark, awful Mr. Boscawen. The poor thing was not able to judge for herself, and she fancied every elderly man was like her father. I think such very unnatural matches should be prevented by act of parliament."

Isabel one morning stole away from her heavy volume of Rapin, to look over the wardrobe of the two brides, which had arrived from town, and were hung in magnificent array in their apartments. Miss Wycherly and Miss Spottiswoode were also sitting in judgment upon their beauty of make and material, and the whole

female population of Wetheral were admitted to admire and wonder over the costly arrangement. Isabel's eyes sparkled at the sight, and, with true girlish delight, she examined and applauded each article as it attracted her notice.

"Oh, Julia, this satin is yours, I am sure! Yes, that is Lady Ennismore at a first glance; how very beautiful! Ah, Julia! I hope you will wear it oftener than I have worn my pretty blue silk: I shall wear it on your wedding-day, and that will be only the second time of its appearance upon any stage. I dare say it will look old-fashioned now compared to yours. One small flounce, you see—how pretty! my blue silk has no flounce." She passed on to the case which contained the jewels presented to Julia by Lady Ennismore.

"Well, Julia, this *is* a sight! how very sparkling and brilliant! I wonder how often you will wear them? Mr. Boscawen does not like me to wear the beautiful brooch papa gave me; he says it is attending to the outside of the platter instead of the inside, and then he said something in Greek or French, I don't know which; but my poor ornament was laid up in silver paper again. I hope Lord Ennismore will let you dress handsomely, Julia."

"I never cared much about dress, Isabel," said Julia; "if dear Augustus dislikes dress, I shall renounce it very willingly."

"Would you, indeed? Ah! but you are very fond of Lord Ennismore, and he likes every thing you do and say: so did Mr. Boscawen once. Oh, Anna Maria, this muslin dress, worked so divinely! One comfort is, Tom Pynsent will let you wear muslin and satin by day and by night, if you choose to do so. Lord Ennismore I know nothing about, but I *do* know my old partner Tom's good-nature. How I wish Mr. Boscawen was like Tom Pynsent! Mr. Boscawen is very kind, though: I am sure he never contradicts me in any thing, but he talks me into his measures, which is just the same thing. I never could argue; and if I did, Mr. Boscawen talks so many languages, I could never argue against them all. How I have been talking!—I could almost fancy myself unmarried. What was that?—a bell? I must run away, or Mr. Boscawen will find me a truant when he returns."

"See here, Isabel," exclaimed Miss Wycherly—"here is a poplin sweetly trimmed; don't run away!"

"My dear, I must; don't tempt me; I am

sure that was Mr. Boscawen's bell, to ask where I was. It is airing time, and I dare say my prison-house is at the door."

Away flew Isabel, in alarm, lest her husband should have perceived her flight from the dressing-room.

"Delightful specimen of matrimony!" observed Miss Spottiswoode.

"It is not a comfortable view of the state," replied Miss Wycherly; "but Isabel and Mr. Boscawen were never intended to become man and wife. It has been one of those unaccountable proceedings which do sometimes occur, and which causes misery to two very excellent people. Either would have been happy in a different connexion: I think Isabel ought to have married John Tyndal."

"And why John Tyndal?" asked Miss Spottiswoode, hastily.

Miss Wycherly smiled. "Only, if it had so happened, Sophy, John Tyndal's good-nature would have given way to Isabel's tastes."

"He is the soul of good-nature and kindness," replied Miss Spottiswoode, "yet he might not have been happy with Isabel."

"Perhaps not, if he liked another lady better; but don't blush, Sophy. I have offended his

brother for ever; Henry Tyndal meets me now, and will not see me, or bow as we pass."

"Because you behaved very ill to him, and Charles too, Penelope."

"Well, now, Sophy, that is past and forgiven, so let us think of the girls' wedding-clothes, and all the bustle of this day week."

The ladies again proceeded to comment upon the beauty of the dresses, and all subjects gave way to the engrossing topic of dress and jewels.

Tom Pynsent was firmly decided not to accept his father's resignation of Hatton upon his marriage; and Sir John Wetheral upheld him in his resolution. Lady Wetheral lost all patience with such determinations.

"I am sure, Sir John, the Pynsents are anxious to leave Hatton, and relinquish the trouble of superintending such large property. How much happier old Mr. Pynsent will be in some quiet nook, enjoying himself, if you did not fancy such foolish schemes, and innoculate Tom with the disease! I wonder, my dear Mr. Boscawen, you do not urge Sir John to allow Mr. Pynsent his own way in this matter."

"*Aparte mala cum est mulier, tum damum est bona*," said Mr. Boscawen.

"You agree with me? Is that your meaning when translated?"

"I do not," replied Mr. Boscawen, mildly; "I give my judgment entirely in favour of Tom Pynsent."

"You have not given the subject your best consideration, my love," observed her husband.

"The thing requires no consideration, Sir John: you are traversing Mr. Pynsent in his wishes, and preparing severe pain for me. I always hoped and believed Anna Maria would be near me, and you are endeavouring to banish her the county. I confess I am ill prepared for this blow, Sir John Wetheral, and I hope I shall not be extremely ill from the shock."

Sir John endeavoured to explain away his lady's objections to the present arrangement; but her mind was totally overpowered by the reflection that Hatton must not yet shelter his daughter.

"I don't understand you, Sir John. Nothing can explain away my distress at perceiving you determined to expel my daughter from Hatton, and I can only appeal to Tom Pynsent from your harsh resolution. I shall implore him to let my daughter be near her mother."

Tom Pynsent's mind was composed of kindly

materials, but his perceptions of right were always clear, and his conduct did credit to those perceptions, by resisting, formidably and pertinaciously, every attempt to attract him from the path chalked out by his straightforward, well-judging principles. Lady Wetheral's eloquent and parental complainings roused his best feelings, but Tom Pynsent was at this moment, as he ever had been, perfectly blind to all hints and concealed purposes. He read her ladyship's meaning, simply as a parent mourning her separation from a loved and gentle daughter, and his excellent heart prompted every means of consolation.

"God bless my soul, Lady Wetheral, I feel quite a brute in taking Anna Maria out of the neighbourhood, while you suffer so much—I am sure I am willing to do any thing to lessen your regret! Anna Maria, my dear little duck, what shall we do for Lady Wetheral?"

"To be separated from two daughters at once," remarked Lady Wetheral, despairingly—"to lose two children at once is a serious misery. Julia *must* live in Staffordshire—she must, and, of course, ought, to settle upon her husband's property: but my dearest Anna Maria need not surely desert us!"

"I'll tell you what I'll decide upon at once," cried Tom Pynsent.

Her ladyship listened with intense eagerness.

"I'll decide at once, and accept my father's offer to live——"

Lady Wetheral seized Tom Pynsent's large red hand. "You have given peace to my heart, Tom, to a mother's deep disquietude — I understand you — my Anna Maria will live near me. You will be brilliant, as I anticipated, my dear girl!"

"I'll do what I never thought I could do," continued Tom Pynsent; "but I am sure I'll not separate you from your daughter, if you love her as well as I do. Come, then, I'll accept my father's offer of a large house in Dog Pole; and though I never lived in a town, I'll do it to quiet your heart, Lady Wetheral."

Her ladyship sunk into a chair — she could only articulate, faintly, "Oh—no, no!"

"Yes, but I will, though, Lady Wetheral. I'll remove the kennel to Coleham, and then I can hunt; I'll amuse myself on Sundays with shewing my wife the hounds, and I must patronise the poor devils of players in an evening, to amuse my little woman here. I will do

it, upon my soul: I'm not joking, Lady Wetheral."

"No, it cannot be — I see it is wrong — no, you shall not live in Shrewsbury to please *me*," said her ladyship, writhing in horror; "my daughter would become ill in a close atmosphere. You would become disgusted too. I see very clearly my mistake—no, that must not be. A little effort will shake off maternal regrets." Lady Wetheral trembled with the remembrance even of Tom Pynsent's offer. Her daughter living in Dog Pole, and going to the play like a mechanic's wife! — oh, let her die first! She was obliged to have recourse to her salts.

Anna Maria was surprised at the strong emotion which seized upon her mother. She offered consolation in her own way.

"But, mamma, if you are so distressed at our leaving you, I beseech you to postpone my marriage for a short time, till the remembrance of Julia has subsided. I cannot bear to see you suffer, mamma. Let my marriage be suspended a fortnight—I know Tom will accede for my sake, won't you, dear Tom?"

"I would rather live in Dog Pole than postpone my marriage," answered Tom Pynsent, sturdily.

"Neither, neither," said Lady Wetheral, rising; "I will not hear of any change. I am foolish in my fondness, but I must have fortitude, like other mothers. I must remember I have Clara and poor little Chrystal to comfort me. Decide upon your place of residence, and so it is not a town or a village, I shall be satisfied."

Lady Wetheral quitted the room in a state of mind most pitiable; she had been foiled in her wish to see Anna Maria placed immediately at the head of the Hatton establishment, and, this one wish disappointed, she felt as though every other gratified vision of grandeur sank into nothingness; one defeat obliterated a thousand victories; such is the nature of a mind unaccustomed to meet impediments in its rapid course.

"Tom!" said his fair *fiancée*, as the door closed upon them, "I am going to wish a wish."

"You wished a pretty wish, just now, you little rascal, didn't you?" answered her lover, throwing his arm round Anna Maria, and squeezing her till she exclaimed:—

"Oh, for Heaven's sake, Tom! your arm is like a steam-engine in full play!"

"I'm afraid I am rough," said Tom, anxiously rubbing the arm which had been pinioned

to her side by his embrace, "but I am an awkward dog by nature. Come, what is your wish, and you shall have it; but, no more putting off the wedding-day, mind."

"I should like, Tom, to go to Paris."

"By Jove!" ejaculated Tom Pynsent, in extremity of astonishment, "by all the saints and holy women, what are we to do at Paris, my darling girl?"

"Just to see Paris, my dear Tom, and pass a few weeks there."

"I think I see myself in Paris, d—n me!" cried her lover, excited something beyond his usual subdued language in Anna Maria's presence: "the Frenchmen will hoot me through the streets; why, we can't manage a sentence in French between us!"

"We can hire somebody to speak for us, dear Tom, and every one speaks French now, except ourselves. I want to see Paris, and Blucher, and, what can it signify, whether we speak English or French?"

"How shall we eat their infernal frogs and garlic, Anna Maria?" asked Tom Pynsent, with a shudder, "and, what shall we do in a great city, without knowing their jargon? My dear girl, we shall be like the babes in the wood!"

"No, no, Tom, we shall get on like other people, and Sir John Spottiswoode delights in Paris; he wishes his mother and sister to join him, Penelope says. We shall find him out; and, then if you dislike Paris, we can return home, you know."

"I never was at sea in my life, Anna Maria; I never was even upon the Severn. Deuce take it, I shall be like the hounds at fault, and you, my poor girl, will want to get back to Shropshire."

"No, I shall not," said Miss Wetheral; "say, Tom, you will take me to Paris!"

"I'll take you to the world's end, my darling, if you fancy it; how is this little arm? I'm not fit to take charge of a creature like you, with my rough ways, but you shall have all your little whims gratified."

Thus, then, was a visit to Paris decided upon; and Tom Pynsent renouncing his country, and truly English tastes, gave way at once to Anna Maria's wishes, and commenced preparations for a foreign expedition. Certainly no character possessed more real kindness, than the unselfish and affectionate Tom Pynsent, for, of all men upon earth, he was the least calculated, in taste and habits, to relish even a temporary banishment from his native land.

CHAPTER X.

There was wassail in Wetheral Castle previous to the nuptials; a scene of gaiety repugnant to Sir John's ideas of propriety, but which was not checked by the simple expression of his wishes. In vain he remonstrated against the levity which surrounded him; in vain he disapproved of the course of dinner-parties which preceded so immediately an event of deep importance to the happiness of two children. His lady protested the "proprieties" were not infringed by a house full of company.

"If, Sir John, your daughters were on the eve of marriage with plebeian men of wealth, or had they chosen to select professional men, or even men of inferior weight in their respective counties, I grant you it would be an unnecessary display; in the present case, the neighbourhood expect a gaiety, which throws a sort of halo round the approaching event. One daughter, love, becomes a countess on Thursday next, and

one daughter weds the finest property in Shropshire. I wonder you do not exult with me! I have been complimented with burning hearts, I am sure, by all my married friends, and, as Lady Farnborough said yesterday very truly, I have monopolized the first matches in the counties of Salop and Staffordshire. I am aware I have done so; I am aware I have taken great pains to promote my children's welfare. I may say, too, Julia's match was exclusively my own, in its invention and maturity."

"My dear Gertrude," replied Sir John, calmly, "I am satisfied if my girls are marrying according to their own satisfaction, as far as regards themselves; but I cannot exult in losing two members of my family, when I strongly doubt the happiness of one of them."

"My dear love! you have the oddest notions! but you were always unaccountable. I am proud to receive the congratulations of my friends. I wish Anna Maria had persuaded Tom to remain at Hatton, when it was first named, for old Pynsent may live these twenty years! However, since Hatton is out of the question, I am glad they are going abroad. I should not like Anna Maria placed in any situation less magnificent than Hatton, and people of distinc-

tion crowd to Paris now, to see the allied sovereigns. Tom has bought a very handsome travelling chariot; his appointments will be perfect."

"I should think, Gertrude, less bustle would be more agreeable to you, on the eve of parting with your daughter for twelve months."

Lady Wetheral sighed. "A little amusement, perhaps, is useful in softening my regrets, and Mrs. Boscawen, poor child, is so delighted with the entertainments! How Mr. Boscawen has managed, I cannot imagine; *I* never could silence Isabel, but he has succeeded; and Isabel is really a little star now in society. *I* had quite given her up. Mrs. Boscawen, poor child, was in ecstacies over her sisters' wardrobes. They have jewels which a crowned head might prize, certainly; whereas, Boscawen gave Isabel nothing. I confess I do sometimes feel indignant that the Lady of Brierly is so very simply dressed, but I never liked Boscawen's temper."

"He considers Isabel too young to indulge in folly, my dear Gertrude."

"Temper, all temper," returned her ladyship; "an old man marrying a young wife, should consider *her* tastes and *her* wishes. What did Isabel become Mrs. Boscawen for, but to com-

mand advantages, and surround herself with comforts?"

"Then Isabel must learn by experience the wickedness of sacrificing herself to mercenary views. Chrystal," continued Sir John, addressing himself to his youngest child, with earnestness of voice and manner, "your education was made over to my care. Never let your mind rest upon the follies which women delight to enjoy at the expence of happiness and respectability. Let your wishes, my child, rest upon better and nobler views; and advise your elder sisters, when they perceive the fallacy of hunting after useless pleasures, to turn aside from ambition, and think what a bitter draught has been presented to their lips."

"My dear love, a perfect homily!" exclaimed his lady, smiling, "and my youngest daughter's very unpronounceable name will be less disagreeable than her temper, if she is to preach to her family upon your recommendation. I am quite amused by your humility, considering the splendid matches your daughters have made. I am not so gifted with humble feelings; I am silly enough to rejoice in their welfare. The Kerrisons, my love, dine with us to-day. Sir Foster and myself are almost lovers; I am de-

lighted with his sentiments — most excellent man! I told him he must allow us to run away with his pretty daughter for a few weeks, after my dear girls are gone to their new homes. Clara and you, Chrystal, will miss your sisters. I shall be very low myself. Dear girls! I told Sir Foster, Miss Kerrison's lively spirits would be of so much benefit to us! He seemed flattered, I thought, by my remark, and gave such a polite bow of acquiescence! Sir Foster is really a gentleman of the old school; a picture quite."

Lady Wetheral became loquacious in praise of Sir Foster; and in her fulness of commendation, the purpose of her heart betrayed itself.

"I am so provoked when I hear people repeating all the idle reports which emanate from discharged grooms, and low servants. Just the very class of society who deal so largely in ungrateful abuse. I can gather from Sir Foster's sentiments, how gentle his nature must be, and his large family, I am sure, are excellently managed. Such order and economy in every department! I judge, of course, from fountain-head particulars, for Sir Foster and myself talked a great deal upon the subject at Hatton yesterday. I told him his daughter would im-

prove my Clara in matters of economy; her ideas, I said, were at present crude and undigested upon the subject, but I knew her tastes pointed that way."

"So Clara and Kerrison are to marry, are they?"

"You may truly appeal to me, my love, for, indeed, you have little part in your children's prospects. Yes, I have decided upon Kerrison and Clara. No alliance can compete with those which will be celebrated on Thursday, but I bear in mind the old proverb, 'marry your sons when you will, but marry your daughters when you can.' Ripley is the next eligible situation in Shropshire, now Hatton is secured. If Clara will only check her temper! I am sure I have lectured enough upon the subject, and I tell her four or five weeks of gentleness is all I ask at her hands."

"Gertrude, you are wrong, you are wicked," exclaimed Sir John, for once rousing himself into determination, and rising from his chair, "I have been weak and wicked myself in allowing you such uncontrolled liberty over my children's minds, and, God help me, I shall have reason to repent it too soon. I tell you Clara shall *not* marry Kerrison. I tell you, Gertrude,

I will not have her sacrificed to that violent and coarse fellow at Ripley, to drive a woman into misery or sin, because your ambition will be ministered to!"

Her husband's sudden energy was wholly unexpected, its effect was powerful; her ladyship sank into the seat he had just quitted.

"Really, Sir John, your violence kills my poor nerves. I am not equal to contend against such dreadful exhibitions of temper. My poor constitution requires perfect tranquillity, almost amounting to total silence, and these explosions of passion do me a great deal of harm. Indeed, Sir John, you have overpowered a poor nervous creature." His lady's hands trembled as she spoke, her voice faltered, and the tears coursed down her cheeks.

Did Sir John Wetheral ever resist his lady's pleading when it took the form of suffering, and spoke in the silent eloquence of grief? When did he ever create a sorrow, or cause a heartfelt reproach, without enduring far greater disquietude, from the knowledge of having given pain! He took his lady's hand, and bent kindly over her.

"Gertrude, this is sad work, and the consequences of my weak indulgence will be sadder

still. I have given way to you in every wish of your heart, and submitted my better judgment to your tears, till my authority has passed away, and I am a cipher in all affairs connected with my children. In this particular, however, I will be heard and obeyed. I will not allow of a distant allusion to Clara's marriage with Sir Foster; and the instant I believe, or have reason to *suspect*, any private attempt to draw Clara into such a hateful connection, that instant I will remove my family from Wetheral, and reside in Scotland."

"My head! my poor head, Sir John! Send Thompson to me, my love, for my brain seems on fire! I declare men are so brutal, women's hearts should be cut out of wood. I am quite unfit for company to-day."

Sir John did not ring for Thompson: he had much to say, now that the indolence of his nature was roused into effort, and his mind dwelt with anger upon the meditated sacrifice of Clara.

"Never mind company, my dear Gertrude; I wish all company had been spared this week. The few days which intervene between the present hour and my poor girl's wedding-day

should have passed in domestic privacy and reflection on their parts."

Lady Wetheral's distress and emotion allowed *herself* no moment for reflection. She hastily exclaimed :—

"The less they think about it, poor things, the better!"

"This is a fearful idea, Gertrude. If you conceive matrimony to be a leap which only the ignorant should take, you condemn yourself in your own plans. A husband-hunting parent, who draws a veil before the victim's eyes, and leads it blindfold to the altar, is a creature to be feared and hated."

Lady Wetheral's astonishment at this remark, pronounced with energy by her husband, produced total forgetfulness of hysterical assistance. Her anxiety to remove blame from her measures, gave seriousness to her manner, but dispelled for the moment all idea of having recourse to fictitious aids. Her lips quivered, but not a tear flowed.

"I am sorry, Sir John, I am grieved to be supposed to sacrifice—to sell my poor children. I seek their good, I wish them to marry well, as I married myself, but you are harsh to call them victims. I have done my duty by them ; I have

obtained excellent establishments for my three eldest, and received congratulations from my friends. I really cannot receive your reproach."

"Then why are they to dissipate thought, Gertrude, and fly from reflection?"

"I'm sure I don't know, my love. One is not always prepared with reasons in an instant: marriage brings cares. They will have the same anxieties about their children's establishments that I have endured. I suppose that was my meaning. I really can't tell; but you frighten me with such violent expressions."

"Gertrude," said Sir John, seriously, "let all painful thoughts and subjects be banished between us. I exact one promise from you."

"My dear love, I never made a promise in my life."

"Then let it be made now, and stand in your mind in its singleness and sacred meaning."

"A promise would overcharge my heart, and burst from my lips, Sir John. I hate promises."

"Yet you promised at the altar, Gertrude, to love and honour, and obey your husband."

"These are words of course, love, and mean that people are to jog on as well as they can together: but what do you require in the shape of a promise?"

"I require your assurance that you will for ever renounce all idea of a son-in-law as far as Sir Foster Kerrison is concerned."

"Do you know, love, I see the hand of Boscawen in your determined dislike of Kerrison. That man has enormous influence with you; and when he married a woman young enough to be his granddaughter, it ought to have silenced him upon the subject of matrimony. Lady Ennismore has heard my reasons in favour of Sir Foster, and it was but yesterday I was speaking upon the subject with her ladyship. Lady Ennismore has returned in high feather from Bedinfield, my love, and looks nearly as young as Julia; does she not? She assured me Thursday would be the brightest day in her calendar of pleasures. I am sure it will be a day of proud delight to me!"

"I will not allow you to include Sir Foster Kerrison in the bridal party, Gertrude. I wish you to understand that I object to every species of intimacy with the Ripley family."

"My dear John, why did you not express your wishes earlier? I have indeed asked that pretty, cheerful creature, Lucy Kerrison, to spend a few days with Clara when she loses her sisters, and I felt obliged to include her father

in the wedding arrangements. I am sorry your odd ways of thinking prevent so many agreeable circumstances from becoming valued, but so it is, and I cannot decline Sir Foster's society without a cogent reason to apologise for my change of manner."

"I only object to the man on Clara's account," replied Sir John, considerably annoyed at the intelligence.

"What nonsense, Sir John! Do I insist upon the girl's falling in love, or do I lay violent hands upon the owner of Ripley?"

"Not exactly, Gertrude, but I object to your eternal plans and manœuvres, which tend to the same effect."

Lady Wetheral kissed her hand playfully.

"Avaunt such notions! A mother is a very different being from a father. One is all tenderness and anxiety for the future; the other dreams heavily, and not always wisely, over the present. Look at Chrystal there, sitting bolt upright, with her hair in such masses, and her throat covered up like the picture of Heloise. You find her necessary to your amusement now, but you are blind to her future advantage. Who will ask for a wife from the alarming precincts of your book-room? Who will care to please a girl brought

up among authors, full of self-importance, and whose conversation will preclude her from pleasing others?"

"Christobelle is a very agreeable companion," was her father's reply.

"She will do for old Lesley's nephew, perhaps," observed her ladyship, listlessly. "Kerrison says they have got him into Dundonald's ship."

A short silence ensued, and Lady Wetheral quitted the room, unshackled by any definite promise upon the subject of Sir Foster Kerrison. Sir John sank again into tranquil employments, satisfied that his sentiments were made known, and that henceforth, when the bustle of the double marriage should subside, the tide of gaiety would ebb, and Wetheral Castle become a scene of calm and domestic cheerfulness. Then all this communication with Ripley must terminate, and Clara would not be subjected to the constant society of Sir Foster Kerrison. This happy vision lulled Sir John Wetheral into present security, and his mind dismissed the subject from its consideration.

Nothing could exceed Isabel's delight at the daily party which met in the splendid dinner-room at Wetheral. Nothing could be more

delightful to her imagination than the scene which presented itself to her view each day after the fatigues and annoyance of a long morning passed in her husband's dressing-room. When the six o'clock bell rang in the assembled guests, and warned them to their toilette, Isabel emerged from her labours, and, with the wild delight of a girl emancipated from a boarding-school, she flew to her room and prepared for the exquisite amusement of the evening. It is true, she was constrained to enter the drawing-room leaning discreetly upon her husband's arm, and his tall figure hovering round her chair, checked for a time the exuberance of her spirits, by his close and anxious watchfulness; but her eyes feasted upon the countenance and dress of those around her. Compared with Brierly, this alone was happiness. She looked beamingly upon her sisters, and complacently at the gentlemen, who were so soon to carry them from her sight. She never tired of watching Miss Wycherly, and her beau, Charles Spottiswoode; the former delighting her with the oddity of her remarks, and the latter full of agreeable entertainment.

Wholly wrapt up in the bustle of the scene, Isabel forgot the plodding disquietude of the morning, and utter oblivion closed over the

studies which Mr. Boscawen vainly hoped would reach her taste and improve her mind: her soul was dedicated only to simple subjects, and the warm-hearted Isabel acknowledged no desire beyond the delight of seeing happy faces and hearing kind remarks. Life to her was a blank, if it brought other sounds than affectionate greetings, or produced other objects than smiling, well-dressed individuals.

During dinner, Isabel's eyes feasted silently upon her friends; but when the ladies rose to quit the dinner-room, and her spirit became disenthralled by the door closing upon Mr. Boscawen, then did her speech burst its enclosure, and revel in unrestrained freedom. The day preceding the nuptial morning Isabel was in very high spirits, almost as unsubdued as in the days of her singlehood: even Mr. Boscawen could scarcely repel the vivacity of her remarks, though he stood tall and grim before her, his dark eyes fixed upon her face, and his strongly marked eyebrows lowering at the rapid remarks which passed her lips. *Gaieté de cœur* played in her eyes that evening, in spite of her silent, stern-looking attendant; and, when the ladies withdrew, Isabel caught Miss Wycherly's arm in their progress to the drawing-room.

"Oh, my dear Miss Wycherly, now I've got away from Mr. Boscawen, I have so much to say, and I must say it all before he leaves the dining-room, you know! Well, how beautiful Lady Ennismore looks, and what a lovely ornament in her hair! I wish Mr. Boscawen would let me wear ornaments! I have been teasing him to allow me to wear a feather to-morrow-morning, but he replies in some unaccountable language, which I suppose means 'no.' I want to ask the girls if they are frightened about to-morrow: I was not a bit alarmed. If I had known, though, how little I was to be mistress of Brierly, I would not have married."

Isabel flew to her sisters, on reaching the drawing-room, without waiting any reply from Miss Wycherly.

"Now, I want to know if either of you feel frightened. I only laughed, if you remember. Lady Ennismore, won't Julia be very happy?"

"I trust so," replied her ladyship, smiling, and obligingly pressing Julia's hand between her's. "My daughter will repose on flowers, if a wish of mine has power to confer such a destiny."

Julia turned her head towards Lady Ennis-

more; joy and affection sparkled in her eye, but she did not speak.

"Ah, you are so charming, dear Lady Ennismore," exclaimed Isabel — "how I wish Mr. Boscawen would make *me* repose on roses, and leave that horrid "Universal History," which puzzles me to death. I don't think you are in spirits, my dear Anna Maria; but you need not be afraid of Tom Pynsent, I'm sure — he was the very best partner I ever had. I'm sure Tom will spoil you. He allowed me always to call the same country dance, though I know he would have preferred any other. *You* need not fear, my dear Anna Maria. I shall ask Mrs. Pynsent, to-morrow, if any body need fear dear Tom. Oh, Miss Wycherly, that is the very sweetest comb I ever saw — and my blue silk looks so dowdy by the side of your darling dress, Miss Spottiswoode!"

Lady Wetheral approached Isabel, and complimented her upon her improved looks during her stay at Wetheral.

"Oh, do you think so, mamma? I know I wish I was not in the family way, for I *must* be confined at Brierly, Mr. Boscawen says; and the place is so large and dull.—Anna Maria, I wish I was going to Paris with you—any where,

to get out of Miss Tabitha's way. Oh, Julia, I hope you won't be in the family way soon, for it is terrible to be such a size, and your figure is so lovely."

"Ring for coffee, Chrystal," said Lady Wetheral, in gentle tones, but suffering acutely under the laugh which was raised by Isabel's speech.

"Oh, don't ring for coffee, yet," cried Isabel. "I have so much to say, and Mr. Boscawen will leave the dining-room if he hears a bell.—No, don't order coffee, yet. Clara, I must not utter Sir Foster's name, because Mr. Boscawen tells me not; but I think I know whose wedding will be next. I saw him in the avenue to-day! ah ha!—I really think you are too handsome for Sir Foster — now I am going to make a match for dear Chrystal."

So ran on the happy, gay-hearted Isabel, perfectly blind to Lady Wetheral's agony of mind, and her efforts to turn the conversation into other hands. Miss Spottiswoode and Miss Wycherly encouraged Isabel's ingenuous and indiscreet powers of chat.

"Chrystal," repeated her ladyship, "I am pining for coffee."

"No, no, I vow you shall not approach the

bell," cried Isabel, arresting Christobelle's hand as she prepared to obey the hint. "My dear mamma, don't be thirsty yet, I have so much to say. Do you know I have only recovered my old spirits within these four days, and they will expire again the moment I set off for Brierly. If you ring for coffee, Mr. Boscawen will rise up before me like Samuel at the Witch of Endor's call, which I read this morning to him."

"Do you really read a chapter every morning, besides studying arts and sciences?" asked Miss Wycherly, seating herself on a stool beside Isabel. "Now, girls, form a circle, and listen to Mrs. Boscawen's prospectus of married education."

"Prospectus!" replied Isabel, laughing—"Heaven knows what that is; but, now you are all listening, I will tell you every thing. What merry faces! I wish Mr. Boscawen would let me fill Brierly with such faces, and allow us to scamper over the park and feed the deer. I got old John, one day, to—"

"Who is old John?" said Miss Spottiswoode, who formed the centre of the circle.

"The butler, my dear, the old butler.—I wish Mr. Boscawen would let me do exactly as I like. Ah, Julia, Lord Ennismore is not so old as Mr.

Boscawen, so he will be so good-natured!—As to dear Tom Pynsent, I know he will let Anna Maria dance from morning till night. Mr. Boscawen says married women cannot be too grave, but he never told me so till I was married. Mr. Boscawen loves Chrystal; that's one thing, therefore, she will return with us to that horrible Brierly. Mamma, we are going to run away with Chrystal."

"Are you, Mrs. Boscawen?" Her ladyship spoke languidly, as though she was resigned to the endurance of all evils, till her son-in-law should appear.

"Oh yes. Mr. Boscawen told me he should take away my sister Chrys. She is twelve years old, now; quite a companion, he says, for me, if I ever have half her application—that, I'm sure, I never shall have. Old John told me—"

The door opened and disclosed the gaunt figure of Mr. Boscawen, approaching in the dignity of extreme height, and large, bushy eyebrows. He walked slowly and silently towards his young wife, and stationed himself at the back of her chair. Isabel became mute.

"You are early, Mr. Boscawen," observed Lady Spottiswoode. "We were in the first burst of remarks sacred to our sex."

"Make me a participator," he replied, smiling.

"Never," replied Miss Wycherly. "We have too much freemasonry to admit you behind the scenes."

"My wife hears no conversation, Miss Wycherly, which her husband may not share, I presume?"

"La, Mr. Boscawen," eagerly exclaimed Isabel, turning to her husband, "you don't like nonsense, and we talk nothing else."

"I am sorry to hear you confess such folly and wickedness, my love," replied Mr. Boscawen. "I had hoped better things."

"Well, Mr. Boscawen, I don't mean exactly nonsense. I don't mean what *you* mean by nonsense. I only mean, we—we—"

"What do you really mean, Isabel?" Mr. Boscawen took her hand kindly, and meant evidently to be playful, but it was the donkey attempting to imitate the lapdog. Isabel coloured, and withdrew her hand in alarm. Her husband's shaggy brows concealed the kindly expression of his eye, as it rested upon her face.

"I am sure I don't know, Mr. Boscawen, what I mean. I don't think I ever mean any thing."

Mr. Boscawen made no reply, but resumed

his position behind Isabel's chair. An awkward pause was agreeably relieved by the entrance of coffee, and shortly afterwards the gentlemen entered from the dining-room. Tom Pynsent flew to Anna Maria, as usual. Lord Ennismore seated himself by the side of his mother.

"Lord," cried Mrs. Pynsent to Lady Spottiswoode, "I can't find out a single good quality in that fellow, Ennismore, to attract a girl like Julia Wetheral. If the poor monkey hasn't popped himself down by his mother, instead of his bride. Look at my Tom, now! See how he rattles and coos to his dove! Why, my poor Bobby was not such a honey lover as this Ennismore; and Bobby, you know, would not set the Thames on fire."

Sir John sat between Anna Maria and Julia, in silence; he listened with pleased attention to Tom Pynsent, who was dilating upon the comforts he had prepared for his young wife's travelling mania.

"God knows what sort of a figure I shall cut," he remarked, in his usual stentorian tone of voice. "I can't fancy much hunting or good shooting among such thin, whey-faced chaps as the French; and, as to dogs, *they* can know nothing by being spoken to in such a language. I

can't speak a word of French, and Anna Maria is as wise as myself. I haven't a notion how we shall get on, but, if my little girl is pleased, I am content. A man should please his wife, you know, or he must be a brute. I wish the Ennismores would join us. Ennismore, my lad, here, come this way—it is not too late now to change your mind and join us in Paris."

Lord Ennismore rose and joined the party, who had grouped round Sir John and his daughters. Lady Ennismore followed her son, and placed her arm carelessly within his. Tom Pynsent repeated his observation, and Julia gave her bridegroom a beseeching look, which was observed by Miss Wycherly. Lady Ennismore answered Tom Pynsent's appeal, with her sweetest smile.

"I almost wish we were going *en masse*, my dear friends, to enjoy your delightful visit to Paris. I almost wish the Bedinfield property was situated on the banks of the Loire, to be able to snatch moments at the French capital. My dear Julia will be so occupied in her new domain, she will not have leisure to sigh for other scenes; and I must bask a while in her happiness, before I can allow myself to imagine I am a dowager, and free to roam about."

"Perhaps *we* will go with you!" exclaimed Isabel, in a moment of excitation, forgetful of Brierly, of her situation, and of her husband's tastes. "Mr. Boscawen, I should so like to go abroad!—Mr. Boscawen, do let us join Tom and Anna Maria!—I should so love to go to a place where I could not speak a word of the language—to see people stare and eat nasty frogs!"

"My dear Isabel!" said her husband, pressing his hand upon her shoulder, in token of his wish she should remain silent.

"Well, Tom Pynsent said so, Mr. Boscawen! didn't you, Tom?—didn't you say they eat frogs, and snails, and things alive?"

Mr. Boscawen never hazarded a reply to provoke fresh rejoinders—he only alluded to Isabel's state of health, which he feared might suffer from late hours, and in a tone of voice, soft, yet decided—a tone which Isabel never dared to resist—he offered his arm, and counselled her to retire for the night.

"Another hour for Mrs. Boscawen—let me pray for one hour only," said Mr. Charles Spottiswoode—"this will be our last general meeting!"

"My wife's health is of great consequence to her friends," replied Mr. Boscawen, mildly, as

Isabel rose in dismay. "I must attend to my wife."

"Oh, indeed I am very well in health, Mr. Boscawen, though I am rather heavy to look at. Mrs. Tollemache was much larger than I am, when she danced a reel, wasn't she, Miss Wycherly?"

Mr. Boscawen was deaf and dumb, upon principle, whenever Isabel began to converse. He led his wife to her mother, in silence, to pay her retiring compliments, and Christobelle accompanied them in their transit. When Isabel was deposited in her room, Mr. Boscawen began the evening lecture.

"Isabel, you shock me to death with your ignorance and indelicacy."

"I'm sure I was not indelicate, Mr. Boscawen. You are always finding fault, now I am married to you," sobbed Isabel.

"My love, you should not allude to your situation before gentlemen, or name Mrs. Tollemache in that extraordinary way."

"Well, I did not know there was any harm, Mr. Boscawen! I declare I wish I was not in any situation at all, for you carry me away from every pleasant amusement, and it makes this place as dull as Brierly."

"I am sorry you weep, my love, and find Brierly so dull. I hoped you would be happy here, at least, yet you hurt me by complaining and tears. My dear Isabel, don't be so childish."

"Well, I *am* a child, Mr. Boscawen. I'm only eighteen, next Sunday."

"I cannot bear to see you weep, Isabel;" and Mr. Boscawen hung tenderly over his wayward wife. "You will do yourself an injury."

Isabel had sufficient acuteness or instinct to perceive the source of her temporary power, and she employed the moment to advantage. Her sobs increased in vehemence.

"I only wished to—to wear—one little white feather—at my sister's wedding to-morrow—and you refused me, Mr. Boscawen."

"Did I, Isabel? Cease this sobbing, and you shall have the feather; do, my love. You shall wear a plume, only be tranquil; as many feathers as you please, Isabel, only cease weeping." Mr. Boscawen drew his sobbing wife upon his knee, and fondled her, like an infant in the arms of its nurse.

"I only wish for two feathers, Mr. Boscawen; one to play easily, and a long thing to droop."

"You shall have them, Isabel; now lay down your little head on my shoulder."

Isabel sank upon her husband's shoulder like a wayward child fatigued with its own efforts; her sobbing gradually subsided, and a low murmuring noise succeeded, which again softened into sighs. Christobelle quitted the Boscawens to return into the drawing-room. Isabel had gained her point, and the feather was won.

How Christobelle's young heart gloried in the scene which presented itself to her view the eventful morning of her sister's marriage! A large and well-dressed company filled the great drawing-room to overflowing; and Christobelle's eye traversed the apartment, resting upon each group, as they offered themselves to her attention. She saw Anna Maria pale as when her heart pined under love unrequited, hanging upon her father's arm, while her lover stood near her, even more red-faced and happy than in his day of acceptance. Julia sat composed between her bridesmaids, Miss Wycherly and Miss Spottiswoode. Lady Ennismore was standing immediately behind her, leaning on her son's arm. Isabel, bright and sparkling, was closely attended by Mr. Boscawen; the plume so long coveted, waving gracefully in her blue silk hat. Mrs. Pynsent was there, full of happy importan evidently taking command of all proceedin

and untired with gazing upon Tom, her only son, now on the point of leaving England, full dressed for his journey—large, loud, and good-looking. The Tyndals were grouped with the Kerrisons and Clara. Sir Foster stood silent and absent, winking his left eye with a nervous motion, which produced an extraordinary effect.

Lady Wetheral glided among her guests with an ease and grace of manner truly bewitching. No one could have supposed her heart was swelling with triumph at the events which were shortly to deprive her of the society of two children, or that her present attention was deeply fixed upon Clara and Sir Foster Kerrison. Every turn of the baronet's countenance was eagerly noted by her acute eye; and though, to common observers, Sir Foster was looking stupidly before him, winking his eye, and tapping his leg with a cane, her keen perception drew conclusions from impossible things, and it added increased graciousness to her insinuating manners.

Far less satisfied was Sir John Wetheral's mind, as he glanced from Tom Pynsent to the effeminate figure of Lord Ennismore, and thought of Julia's futurity with a man whose mind appeared to be as imbecile as his person was unmanly. Christobelle could trace his thoughts in

the expression of his eyes, now gazing with pleasure upon Anna Maria, and anon resting mournfully on his beautiful Julia. Christobelle was too young to sorrow with him, or understand the deep feeling of his mind; but the remembrance of his expressive emotions often came over her in after-life, when experience had enlightened her in suffering, and when the bitter pangs of parental disappointment were more clearly understood.

There was a pause of some moments, after the general hum of a first meeting had subsided, as though all parties awaited a summons to the chapel, which in Wetheral Castle still remained untouched by the hand of time, since the days of the seventh Henry. It was a large, and generally well-filled pile of building, many of the nearer neighbours preferring to attend Wetheral Castle for its accommodation in point of distance, and perhaps with reference to the gay luncheons which awaited their return into the great hall. The deep silence was broken by Mrs. Pynsent.

"Here, hallo! what are we waiting for? John Tyndal has been in his canonicals this half hour. Now, Sir John Wetheral, will you lead Anna Maria? Tom, you be hanged; not so fast,

stupy; take Miss Spottiswoode. There you go! Hoy, Charley Spottiswoode, leave Pen, and trot by the side of Mistress Boscawen."

"My wife is under my own charge, thank you," said Mr. Boscawen, bowing smilingly to Mrs. Pynsent.

"Lord, what an ass! Here, Sir Foster, you have tapped a hole in your trowsers with that cane; do move on with Clara Wetheral; she is Anna Maria's bridesmaid. Don't keep humming a tune, my good fellow—get on."

Sir Foster passed on as he was directed, but he took no notice of Mrs. Pynsent's address. He went forward, humming an air, and winking his eye. Clara leaned upon his arm, in white muslin and satin. Never had she looked so very handsome. Perhaps Sir Foster operated as an excitement to her powers of captivation. If a woman could charm Sir Foster Kerrison, she might animate an image of clay; but Clara liked to be spurred on by difficulties.

Tom Pynsent's hunting propensities lay fresh and green at his heart, in spite of circumstance, and a bouquet of geraniums, which bloomed in the button-hole of his coat; for, perceiving Christobelle following the train without a partner, he turned good-humouredly to Henry Tyndal, and called out,—

"Whip in the tail-hound, Harry, and take her to kennel." Christobelle was accordingly escorted into the chapel by Henry Tyndal.

The ceremony ended, which gave Anna Maria for ever to Tom Pynsent, and Julia was saluted Lady Ennismore. Lady Wetheral had reached the summit of her wishes. Which ever way her eye directed its glance, there was glory and triumph. Her two eldest daughters were become head-stones in the county, and Clara was stationed by the side of Sir Foster Kerrison. Could all these things be?

A magnificent breakfast awaited the nuptial *cortège*, but Sir John Wetheral would not appear at the crowded tables; he retired to his study after the ceremony had concluded, desiring to take leave of his children in the privacy of his own place of refuge. Christobelle remained with him during the *déjeûné*, and Mr. Boscawen was deputed to take his place in the scene of festivity.

Anna Maria appeared in a quarter of an hour, to receive her father's blessing ere she quitted his roof for some months, and his paternal care for ever. Her father kissed her glowing cheek, and bade her depart in peace. "You have mar-

ried a good man, and a religious man, my dear child; therefore you will be free from the stings of reproach. The trials of life must fall to your share, but there is one who will kindly share your troubles, and watch over you." He turned to Tom Pynsent. "I give you my child with great satisfaction and pride. I give her to you innocent and good; bring her home untainted by the vices of a foreign land." Anna Maria bent her knee, and received her father's blessing with streaming eyes. She was hurried from his arms into the travelling-carriage which was to convey them to the coast. The gentlemen were all assembled, examining its form and workmanship: but she was silently assisted into her new equipage by her brother-in-law and Mr. Wycherly. They respected her emotion, and forbore to increase it by addressing one word of compliment. Tom Pynsent followed, but his progress was arrested by the solicitude of his mother, who had rushed to the door to look once more upon the athletic form of her beloved son. Recollections of long-past days of parental solicitude overwhelmed Mrs. Pynsent's heart, and produced a flood of tears as she whimpered forth, "I say, Tom."

Tom advanced, and shook hands for the third

time, besides offering every filial consolation over again.

"Steady now, mother — steady: go it at a hand-canter, and don't be disheartened. Take care of my father, and see to the dogs and colts. Let John Ball exercise Longshanks, and look well to the mare. We shall be back to Pen's wedding."

"Come, none of your jibes, you rascal," cried Mrs. Pynsent, smiling through her tears; "how could I guess who Pen cared for, with her wiffering manners? Well, I will look after your concerns, Tom, but how shall I get on with only Bobby? When will you be home, Tom, and when shall I see you again in Shropshire, and what will become of me till you come back? You are leaving your parents when they most want you, Tom." Mrs. Pynsent's grief became audible; and Mr. Wycherly, waiving his nephew into the carriage, endeavoured to lead his sister from the spot.

"It's no use, Bill; you'll never get me away till I have seen the last of my Tom. Anna Maria, take care of Tom, and bring him safe back."

The carriage rolled away, and Mrs. Pynsent

gazed till a turn in the avenue concealed it from her sight; she turned to Mr. Wycherly.

"Take me away now, Bill, and don't speak a word. Put me into my coach, and send Bobby, for I'm done up."

Mr. Wycherly did all and every thing his sister could wish. She was conducted to her "coach," as she always designated the phaeton, weeping violently, and "Bobby" took his place by her side without offering a remark, or hazarding a word of consolation. The Hatton carriage drove off, but poor Mrs. Pynsent's sobs were heard distinctly for some time above the tramp of the horses' feet, as they paced down the green turf of the avenue.

The Bedinfield carriages now drew to the door, and Julia was to depart to another home, as her sister had done before her; but though her destiny appeared more brilliant, though all earthly advantages conspired to render her fate even more envied and enviable than that of Mrs. Tom Pynsent, there was a mournful silence among her friends, and the voice of congratulation sounded low and melancholy.

Smiles and happy prophecy had gladdened Anna Maria's departure; but no one ventured to say that Julia had won a matrimonial prize.

No one could confess their heart was not heavy when they saw that young blooming girl led away by Lord and Lady Ennismore—a peeress and a bride. Miss Wycherly sprung towards her friend as she bade them adieu, and burst into tears. "Julia," she said, in a serious and touching tone, "you appear beyond earthly assistance—far beyond human cares; yet we know not what is to be. Julia, in weal or woe, in evil report or good report, Lidham and its inmates are yours for ever."

"Amen," responded Charles Spottiswoode.

Julia paused, struck by the solemn tone of her friend's affectionate speech: her lip quivered, and the colour fled from her cheek.

"Penelope, I know you love me, and I hope our meetings will ever be in undisturbed and happy friendship, but your manner is foreboding of evil."

"I have a pain at my heart, Julia," replied Miss Wycherly, pressing her hand upon her bosom; "but it will pass away. I have a severe pain *here*, but I trust it will never visit your warm heart. Julia, may you be the happiest of the happy! but, in all changes, remember Penelope Wycherly, whom you served in her need." Miss Wycherly threw her arms round Julia,

and the two friends embraced in silence. Lady Ennismore interfered.

"This is a sad specimen of congratulation, my dear Miss Wycherly, and my daughter will be made ill by these agreeable, but hurtful phrases. Ennismore, lead your bride to her father; and we will take possession of our jewel, lest melancholy faces dispirit her mind. Lady Wetheral, I believe we are now preparing to carry away our darling."

Lady Wetheral's eyes sparkled with more than triumphant delight, as Julia was led into her father's study; she followed mechanically in the wake of the two Lady Ennismores, and her step sounded proudly as she remembered that her daughter now was numbered among the great ones of the land. Sir John only considered that his child was the wife of a man he could not love, and the daughter-in-law of a woman he did not esteem. The full tide of affection rushed to his heart, but became unutterable from his lips. He could only press Julia to his bosom; he could not tell her, his mind was happy in the prospect which was before her, but he bade God bless her in spirit, and his embrace spoke volumes.

Miss Wycherly did not intrude upon the

sacred scene; but she was stationed in the hall to gaze upon her friend, and watch her movements. Charles Spottiswoode stood near her, but his accents of kind and fond interest were unheeded by Penelope. As Julia emerged from the library, and proceeded towards the hall-door with her new relations, her mother and the Boscawens, Miss Wycherly fixed her eyes upon her friend's pale countenance, and exclaimed, "Julia, you are going; remember my last words, my own dear friend—in all changes, remember me and mine!"

Julia was speechless, but she extended her hand, which Penelope covered with kisses, and resigned with reluctance to Lord Ennismore. "There, my lord," she exclaimed with energy, "take my friend, since it must be so, but you will not love her as I do, or understand her warm heart as I prize it! I shall be ever with you, Julia, in spirit, and my friendship shall be a buckler in time of need. Farewell, my own dear friend!"

Miss Wycherly left the hall, and watched Julia's departure through a window more retired from observation. There was only Charles Spottiswoode to listen, and to him her lamentation was addressed. She told her lover all her

fears and all her thoughts respecting Julia's marriage; the melancholy idea took possession of her mind, that Lord Ennismore was unsuited to her friend's character, and, though there was nothing tangible in his lordship's behaviour to elicit a strong objection, there was a decided difference in his character, a manner totally opposed to the character and kindly bearing of her cousin Tom, which must affect every body's mind and opinions. She had an ominous foreboding that Julia would be unhappy, and never would she marry Charles Spottiswoode, unless he would swear, under all reports, under all circumstances, to receive Julia Wetheral at Lidham; yes, though she became a worthless thing, poor, miserable, and contemptible. "Swear it to me, Charles," she cried, "swear it now, ere the carriage-door closes on my friend, and carries her from my sight!"

"I do, Penelope," replied Spottiswoode, kindly. "Lady Ennismore will find me her warm friend in every trial; but, why are you so fearful and foreboding *now?* Why do your fears gain such influence and mastery at this moment of time, when her heart is calm, and *his* affection is undisputed?"

"God help me, Charles! but, as Julia came

from the library just now, she looked like a lamb led to the slaughter. Did you read the expression of Lady Ennismore, the mother's eyes?"

"I did not observe her. I was watching *your* eyes, Penelope."

Miss Wycherly heeded not the words which at another time would have soothed and pleased; she became restless as Julia lingered on the steps with her mother, and her desire was to see Julia once more before she quitted Wetheral, to embrace her yet again, and repeat offers of kindness, which must be totally useless to Lady Ennismore, though they relieved her heart to utter them. Charles Spottiswoode urged her to remain, and avoid giving renewed pain to her friend, who had felt evidently struck by the ominous farewell; but Miss Wycherly would hear no objection to her anxiety. She advanced hurriedly to the door, but Charles stood before her, playfully holding her hands, and entreating her to resume her seat. The little strife of lovers did not last many moments; the sound of carriage-wheels caused Miss Wycherly to rush past her companion, and enter the hall. Julia was gone.

CHAPTER XI.

The gaiety of Wetheral was not much interrupted by the marriage of its most influential members. Lady Wetheral lamented the loss of her daughters, and often in public alluded to her solitary hours of grief; but she was indefatigable in her efforts to amuse Miss Kerrison and Clara; and, though her lips breathed sorrowful words, her eyes and attention exclusively belonged to Sir Foster Kerrison. Her ladyship laboured to maintain "that no passion could be more selfish than sorrow," and she took credit to herself, "that, in despite of low and sad feelings which prompted her to remain at Wetheral in silent meditation, *she* had never given way to her wishes. Indeed, she felt the claims of others upon her time and attention; and, though her heart did hope Clara might remain single for some years, to be her companion, yet it was her

duty to chaperone her to the amusements which her youth expected, and, perhaps, required. All young people loved vivacity, and, though some parents forgot the days of their own youth, and checked the happy views of their children, *she* would not shrink from a mother's duty." With these impressions of "duty," Lady Wetheral was fully employed in escorting Clara and her young companion to every public amusement; and Wetheral still continued the scene of festivity, and the arena of matchmaking, as it had ever been, since the day Mrs. Tom Pynsent made her *début* in public.

However easily the tastes of young men might bend to Lady Wetheral's flattering lips, combined with her daughter's attractions, there was some cleverness required in guiding Sir Foster Kerrison to the desired point. His silent manner, and provoking absence of mind, perpetually defeated the mother's purposes, but her spirit rose superior to all annoyances. "It might and would take time to throw fetters upon a man who forgot every word or engagement of the previous half-hour, but perseverance must level every impediment. Clara was very young, and patience must be severely taxed, if people were resolved to carry a favourite wish into opera-

tion." Clara had not such a provision of that precious gift as her mother possessed, and it required constant watchfulness on her part to subdue the appearance of irritability before the object of her wishes. Her mother, too, watched over the unquiet spirit, and diverted its attention in the time of need. One day, Clara became impetuous upon the subject. Sir Foster never called at Wetheral without a special invitation; and how was she to manage a great, stupid creature, who neither saw nor felt attentions? Lady Wetheral smiled.

"My dear girl, patience! Sir Foster must be managed, and if you will only leave the affair in my hands, all will be well. Do not, I beseech you, look so very cross; the sight of temper drives away all men who are not actually in love, and perpetual good-humour is a perpetual attraction."

"How can I keep any temper with such a heavy mass of human nature?" exclaimed Clara, scornfully.

"Don't call names, my love; I am going to tell you. Do not give yourself any trouble, only look pleased and pleasantly at Sir Foster; I will effect the rest. Some men are rather dull, but absence of mind requires skill only in the

parties concerned. I do not think Sir Foster dull; absent only — very absent; but perhaps that my operate in our favour."

"In what way?" asked Clara, inquisitively.

"Never mind, my love, look pleasantly at Sir Foster, and leave the minutiæ to me. We must lead him gently and gradually to make Wetheral a daily resting-place; and while Lucy is here, it can be done. Pray, Clara, endeavour to check your temper before Lucy. I should not wish her to report unfavourably of your manners at Ripley; so *much* depends upon your trying to appear good-humoured—do, my love."

With evident painful effort, Clara did manage to conceal her irritable nature from the particular observation of her friend Miss Kerrison, who was the main spring of that machinery which was to involve her father. To Lucy Kerrison Lady Wetheral directed the most flattering attentions, and offered the most agreeable series of parties of pleasure; to her young and unsuspicious ear was consigned every compliment which could lull observation, awaken her love, and interest her in all Lady Wetheral's actions. In short, a separation from Clara and the delights of Wetheral was becoming unbearable to the heart and imagination of poor Mis-

Kerrison, and her eyes filled with tears of real sorrow, soon made apparent to her ladyship's quick apprehension, the regret with which her young guest contemplated a return to Ripley. This was, to use her favourite expression, "all in their favour;" and she mentioned the circumstance to Sir John in her own way.

"This poor, dear Lucy Kerrison, my love, is sadly overcome at the thoughts of leaving us. Clara and herself are exceedingly attached; the tears rush to her eyes whenever the subject is alluded to."

"Miss Kerrison is a ladylike, nice girl," replied Sir John.

"Yes, my love, she is quite the companion Clara should have. I approve her good and judicious selection. I wish they may often meet."

Sir John did not reply, and a short pause succeeded.

"I could almost wish Lucy was going to remain with us for Clara's sake. If I thought Sir Foster would not object, I would request him not to recall her."

"Isabel is still with us, Gertrude; Clara has her two sisters."

"Yes—to be sure — oh, yes, Mrs. Boscawen

is here, but she is never visible till the half-hour bell rings. I see very little of poor Isabel myself, and Clara still less. Bell is shut up, too, in the schoolroom, learning to be over-wise and disagreeable; besides, my love, Bell can be no companion to Clara. I wonder Sir Foster does not call to see his daughter! do you know, my love, he has been but once within this fortnight to see us."

"His company is not particularly acceptable, Gertrude."

"Well, Sir John, I only name the circumstance—I am afraid we are not very attractive; however, my love, I will try to extend Miss Kerrison's leave of absence for Clara's sake."

"Do as you please, my only objection is to her father being obliged to marry Clara. I have nothing to produce against his pretty, elegant daughter: don't let Kerrison marry a daughter of mine, and I shall not interfere in your plans."

"Oh! my love, I never compel men to marry. I hope my dear Clara will be my companion for some years. I feel very keenly my dear Lady Ennismore's loss, and so I do poor Mrs. Pynsent."

"Why is Anna Maria 'poor,' Gertrude?—she has married a good man, and a man she likes."

"She is in a manner banished Hatton," re-

plied Lady Wetheral, sighing; "I cannot think her happy while she roves about plain Mrs. Pynsent, no style—at least, not the Hatton style—no proper establishment, no home, like Lady Ennismore, who drove off to Bedinfield, like the wife of a nobleman—liveries, carriage — all magnificent! How I long to see Julia in her glory."

Sir John could offer no counsel which might check the eager delight his lady felt towards the good things of the earth; he therefore resumed his book, and her ladyship wrote, privately, a most polite billet to Sir Foster, upon the strength of her husband's concurrence in her wish to detain his daughter at Wetheral.

"My dear sir,

"It will break all our hearts to part with your lovely Lucy, and Clara suffers so much in the idea of parting with her friend, that we have a proposal to make. I will not tell you at this moment its nature, because I wish to see you. Ladies, my dear sir, prefer speaking to principals. May I hope to see you at Wetheral to-morrow morning?

"Yours truly,

"G. WETHERAL."

Clara feared Sir Foster would withstand the invitation, so blandly expressed, by forgetting

its existence; but her mother conceived the ambiguity of its expression would raise a germ of curiosity in his mind, which even the inveterate disorder of his brain might not subdue. The wording of the note was talked over before Isabel, and explained to her. Mrs. Boscawen could only entreat Clara not to marry so old a man.

"My dear Clara, Sir Foster will put you into a schoolroom, as Mr. Boscawen has done by me, for old men are alike, I dare say. I assure you, it will be a shocking affair, and I can't give my consent unless you insist upon it. I can't imagine any body marrying an old man, and going to their studies as if they were schoolgirls. Pray take warning by me, Clara, and don't marry Sir Foster."

"My dear Isabel, I am resolved to make the man propose to me. Mamma says I shall lose caste if I am single, for Anna Maria did not marry till she was nineteen, and almost past hope. If I don't take immediately, I shall become *passé*; for mamma says my style of beauty ought to take effect at once."

"You are very handsome, certainly, dear Clara—very handsome. Mr. Boscawen says you are a very beautiful girl."

"Well," replied Clara, smiling complacently,

"I must be up and be doing. Sir Foster is very rich."

"Oh! Clara, and so is Mr. Boscawen: but I never have any money. Once Mr. Boscawen gave me a guinea, and then took it back again because I would not keep an account of all I spent. I bought a shilling's worth of alicampane, and made myself so ill! However, I did not say I had bought it; so, as I could not account for the shilling, I was obliged to relinquish the rest Don't marry an old man, Clara!"

"Sir Foster lets every body spend his money, Isabel."

"Ah, but remember what Mr. Boscawen promised, Clara! I was promised every thing, and got nothing. You don't know how disagreeable it is to be shut up in a morning, reading and translating."

"I shan't read or translate to please Sir Foster," said Clara, with scornful energy. "I marry upon other principles."

"Well, Clara, only try not to marry an old man, for I assure you it is a very unpleasant thing."

"I wonder if Sir Foster *will* call to-morrow, Isabel?"

"Oh, to be sure he will: I am sure I should, if any one asked me."

"Don't name this to Boscawen, Isabel: I don't wish him to know my intentions."

"Certainly not—that is, if I can keep it from him; but he manages to find out all my secrets. However, I will try to keep this all to myself."

So did Mrs. Boscawen resolutely intend; but her secret transpired at the touch of her husband's mental wand. Mr. Boscawen began to talk of returning to Brierly, the very evening of the conversation which had taken place between his lady and Clara, and, after retiring for the night, he mentioned his intention of leaving Wetheral the following week. Isabel clasped her hands in alarm.

"Oh, Mr. Boscawen, not so soon! must we return so very soon?"

"Why not, Isabel? are you afraid of the dulness of Brierly?"

"Yes—no," cried Isabel, "but I want to watch Clara, Mr. Boscawen: I want to observe something."

"What is it all about?" asked Mr. Boscawen. "Is your sister engaged in some speculation, or has your mother decided upon any one whom your sister is decreed to captivate? I think I

have stumbled upon the truth, Isabel, by your countenance."

"How you find things out, Mr. Boscawen!" cried Isabel, blushing and hesitating; "you never allow me to keep a secret."

"Then there *is* one, Isabel. Have the kindness to admit me into the mystery: a wife should have no secrets."

"Well, only promise not to tell," said Isabel, awed by her husband's grave manner and remark, "and I will not keep the secret to myself, though I promised to do so."

"Who required the promise, Isabel?"

Isabel became alarmed, and disclosed the plot upon Sir Foster. Mr. Boscawen listened in silence, and then coolly made his annotations upon the subject.

"When a mother plots for a son-in-law, and her daughter acts upon it, besides implicating a young married sister, under promises of secrecy, it is time to take steps towards withdrawing from such society. I had every intention of leaving Wetheral next week, but now I shall set off to-morrow, at twelve o'clock; therefore, Isabel, give your maid orders accordingly."

Mrs. Boscawen's distress was too violent to be controlled. "Oh, Mr. Boscawen, how can you take

me away to horrible Brierly so suddenly!—how can you frighten me, and threaten to leave Wetheral before our month is quite over! I shall never be confined at all, I'm sure, and Clara will be so angry!" Isabel sat down, overcome with terror.

Mr. Boscawen patiently and kindly explained his line of conduct to his terrified wife. He assured her no notice would be taken of her disclosure, and that no one should suspect the cause of his departure. He expressed his disgust at Clara's conduct, but he was silent upon the abhorrence he conceived to the untired manœuvring of the mother. He trusted Isabel would become attached to Brierly in the course of time; it was a safer home than the infected air of Wetheral; and, after her confinement, if she fancied change of air, he would take her to the sea.

Mr. Boscawen's observations, in some measure, pacified the extreme grief of Isabel; but her night's rest was gone, and she was extremely feverish in the morning, complaining of painful oppression and headache. Mr. Boscawen was fearful his young wife might suffer from the complicated effects of fear and dislike to returning home; but he was resolved in his purpose: nothing now could alter his determination to carry his lady from Wetheral. He announced his intention openly at breakfast, and Lady We-

theral's polite expression of sorrow fell from her lips upon a cold and barren soil: no flowers rose under her gracious shower of compliments.

"My dear Mr. Boscawen, you surprise and grieve me by your resolution: the absence of Isabel and yourself will throw a deep gloom around us."

"I am obliged to you," quietly replied Mr. Boscawen, as he buttered his piece of dry toast.

"Losing three daughters at one fell swoop, is a severe trial," continued her ladyship. "I shall miss my dear Isabel every hour."

Mr. Boscawen deigned no reply; but Isabel, pale and without appetite, sat dissolved in tears, and dared not trust her voice: she feared to displease her husband by any manifestation of grief, but her heart was sinking under the fearful anticipations of Miss Tabitha, and the gloomy routine of Brierly.

"I suppose Sir John is in his study," observed Mr. Boscawen, rising at the conclusion of breakfast.

"Oh, yes, Sir John breakfasts at seven o'clock, when people are, or ought to be, fast asleep. I can't comprehend such ungenial hours and taste. Surely, if breakfast is ended before eleven o'clock, there is sufficient leisure for the affairs of life."

Mr Boscawen's disgust rose to his eyes, and overflowed in the expression of his countenance; but a strong effort subdued the sentence which trembled upon his lips. He rose, and quitted the breakfast-room. When the door closed upon his awful figure, Isabel's misery burst forth: she threw her arms around Clara, who was seated near her, and sobbed violently.

"Oh, mamma, I wish I had never, never married!"

"My dear Mrs. Boscawen," replied her mother, in very soothing accents, "you are not aware of what you say. I am sure you would have been miserable single, and I should have been tormented to death with an unmarried daughter always at my elbow. You are very comfortably and happily married, my love."

"Oh, how can you say so, mamma! I wish I was Chrystal, to sit with papa, and never be obliged to do what I did not like! I wish I was you, Clara, happy and unmarried! I wish I was a bird, or the cat, or any thing but what I am!" Poor Isabel wept freely: she proceeded—"I am going to be shut up with Miss Tabitha and Mr. Boscawen, in that large, gloomy Brierly; I must not laugh, or speak to old John, or see any plea-

sant company. Oh, no one can tell the dullness and frightfulness of Brierly!"

"My dear Isabel, reflect upon matrimony, and tell me who you ever saw perfectly free from care in that state? I consider it a very proper and natural institution, so very properly arranged, and so particularly enforced, that I confess I have no opinion of a woman who does not marry, if all the comforts of life are secured to her. If a woman is protected by a handsome settlement, and those kind of things, she *ought* to marry."

"Do you think so?" said Isabel, languidly.

"I do: I think you married extremely well, and you ought to consider yourself peculiarly fortunate. If Mr. Boscawen is rigid in exacting painful sacrifices from you, remember he was very liberal in making a settlement; there must be trials, my dear children. I am a proof that the happiest matrimony has cares. Your poor father never assisted me in my anxieties about you all: I am certain Lord Ennismore would never have married Julia, if my unwearied efforts had not domesticated him at Wetheral."

"Tom Pynsent will never contradict Anna Maria," said Isabel, as the tears sprang again

to her eyes—"Tom will never wish my sister to read!"

Mr. Boscawen was heard in the hall, giving orders.

"Oh, we are going, mamma; I hear Mr. Boscawen ordering the carriage. I know the tone of his voice in giving that order so well! how my heart beats!" Isabel clung to her mother's arm.

Mr. Boscawen entered, and gave his arm to his pale, trembling wife. "My dear Isabel, I have arranged every thing; you have only your father to visit before you enter the carriage."

His lady appeared ready to faint. "Don't let me see papa! don't let me see papa!" she exclaimed.

"You are agitated, my love," observed her husband, putting his arm round her waist, and speaking kindly. "Do not be flurried, my dear Isabel, you shall see and speak to no one. Clara will be kind enough to tell Sir John how you feel. You tremble very much; try to gain firmness, my love."

Poor Isabel was placed in her carriage, half fainting, without the power to speak or move. Mr. Boscawen was hurt and alarmed for the effects of this agitation upon his lady's health;

but his mind was decided to persevere in removing Isabel. He deputed Clara to explain to her father how much emotion her sister evinced at the thoughts of taking leave; and bowing to Lady Wetheral and Miss Kerrison, Mr. Boscawen took his place by the side of Isabel, whose head reclined against the side of the carriage, nor did she raise it to look her adieus. She appeared too exhausted and sick at heart to make an effort of any kind. How differently she quitted Wetheral upon her nuptial morning!

Sir Foster Kerrison did actually call at Wetheral some hours after the Boscawens' departure. Clara was soothed and flattered, her mother charmed, by the visit. Sir Foster sat silent till he was spoken to.

"My dear sir, this is courteous, indeed," Lady Wetheral began; "I feel much honoured by your polite attention to my wish."

Sir Foster winked his eye and tapped his boot, but he did not seem to comprehend the purport of her ladyship's speech. "Umph, eh?"

"Papa, you received Lady Wetheral's note, of course?" said Miss Kerrison.

"Eh, what?"

"Lady Wetheral's note, papa—the note you received yesterday from Wetheral!"

Sir Foster sat winking, but could not remember any note.

"Oh, papa, you received a note, and I am sure it is in your pocket. Pray, let me look into the recesses of your enormous pockets?"

Miss Kerrison playfully emptied her father's pockets, and Lady Wetheral's note appeared with its seal unbroken, accompanied by sundry letters, straps, nails, and a shoeing horn. Clara's eyes flashed indignation, but her mother's smiled sweetly.

"My dear Sir Foster, I must not complain of your very absent mind, since I only suffer with the rest of the world. Upon my word, this is very amusing! See, my dear Lucy, how entertaining this assemblage of articles promises to be!"

Sir Foster stared, while the ladies laughed over the miscellaneous contents of his pocket. Clara alone sat dignified and offended. Lady Wetheral explained the purport of her note, and begged the company of Miss Kerrison for a longer and indefinite period. Sir Foster hummed an air and tapped his boot during her complimentary and lengthy speech.

"Papa always implies consent when he hums and taps, Lady Wetheral, so that is delight-

fully arranged: but why, papa, did you call here this morning?"

"Where's Boscawen?"

"They have left some hours, to return to Brierly, papa. Did you want to see Mr. Boscawen?"

A smile curled Sir Foster's handsome lip.

"I am sorry Mr. Boscawen is gone then, papa. I suppose you had some horse in view?"

Another smile and tap of the boot.

"I thought so. But, papa, you will never read your letters and notes if I do not return to Ripley; will you?"

Sir Foster winked his eye in silence.

"My dear Lucy," said Lady Wetheral, playfully, "Sir Foster must bring his letters here every morning for your perusal and advice."

"Oh yes, papa, that is an excellent plan; is it not? You must ride over every morning to be searched, and then you will not require my presence at Ripley."

Sir Foster sat two hours without speaking, or appearing to attend to the conversation which took place between his fair companions. He sat in the most complete absence of mind, tapping his boot, which Clara resented by silent looks of contempt. Miss Kerrison was so inti-

mately acquainted with her father's ways that her chat flowed on undisturbed, till the or molu clock struck six ; Miss Kerrison then approached her father.

" Well, papa, it's time for you to return home ; it is six o'clock."

" Eh, umph, what ?"

" You must order your horse, papa, and go to Ripley to dinner."

" Oh, Sir Foster surely will not quit us; we shall hope for his company at dinner to-day." Lady Wetheral spoke in earnest and bewitching tones.

" No, thank you, dear Lady Wetheral, not to-day. This is papa's way; he always goes on in this way at some person's house, and I dare say, having once called here, papa will be regularly at Wetheral every day."

Her ladyship's quick perceptions saw the advantage of gaining Sir Foster Kerrison as a daily visitor ; she caught at once the propriety of allowing him to take his own way in the manner and time of his visits: she therefore ceased to pour forth invitations, but, taking at once a comprehensive view of his character and habits, Sir Foster was allowed to depart in the same mechanical form which characterised his

I'm sure I am always boasting of Miss Clara's sweet temper, as far as I am concerned."

"I wish her to be silent and calm in appearance, yet I am ever upon the watch to soften Miss Clara's remarks, and explain away offensive looks. I don't think, Thompson, Miss Clara will marry soon."

"Oh, my lady, I have heard many remarks about Sir Foster Kerrison's attentions at my young ladies' wedding!"

"What remarks, Thompson? what do foolish people say now?" asked her lady, affecting nonchalance.

"People say Sir Foster is not a very talkative gentleman, my lady, but then he stood always close to Miss Clara; I heard too he called this morning; so people put two and two together, as they very well may."

"If people calculate so erroneously, they must expect to be wrong in the sum total," replied her ladyship, smiling and internally pleased at remarks having been uttered; "but we shall see, Thompson."

Miss Kerrison's prediction concerning her father's way of sitting hours in silence at people's houses was verified. Having called at Wetheral to see Mr. Boscawen upon some affair

caused her mother infinite vexation and alarm. She dreaded lest Clara's irritable spirit should transpire even to Lucy Kerrison: she dreaded lest her own web should become unravelled by the very hand she wished to bestow upon Sir Foster. It was necessary to deal very gently and delicately with a disposition like Clara's. She did not possess the gentleness of manner which was so eminent in Anna Maria, or the sprightly sweetness of Lady Ennismore. Her beauty was superior to both sisters, which prepossessed many in her favour; but her wayward and powerful temper was known only in her own home. It was her mother's aim to shield it if possible from observation. Thompson, who had ever played a conspicuous part in the family, was at this time installed into a kind of confidential friend; and to her Lady Wetheral bitterly complained of the fatigue and terror attendant upon her own watchfulness.

"I declare, Thompson, Miss Clara gives me infinitely more trouble than my three eldest daughters combined. I am always fearful of some display of temper occurring in an unfortunate hour to betray her to gentlemen."

"Yes, my lady, that would be sad indeed.

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connected with horses, and having also remained his usual two hours with the ladies, unnoticed and unbored with attentions which required him to talk, Sir Foster Kerrison, on the following morning, again deposited himself at Wetheral, and was allowed, with the tact of a veteran matron, to sit in a lounging chair, tapping his boot, and winking his eye without molestation. Miss Kerrison took an inventory of the stores deposited in his pockets during the first moment of her father's entrance, an employment he never noticed beyond an absent smile; after which ordeal he was consigned to a half-dozing kind of existence, till Miss Kerrison warned him to depart, by assuring him the clock had struck six. Day after day Sir Foster was found regularly installed in the ladies' boudoir at Wetheral, and as regularly did he depart at his daughter's summons.

Had Lady Wetheral rashly urged Sir Foster to dine at the Castle, it would have broken through the habit which impelled him to move backwards and forwards at stated times, and by certain sounds; it might too have drawn him towards new people and other houses. Lucy Kerrison was perfectly right in her suggestion

that, having called by accident, his visits might continue through habit.

There was another advantage attendant upon Sir Foster's morning lounge. Sir John, who rarely appeared out of the precincts of his study, was ignorant of the events which gilded the pleasures of the boudoir. The study was far removed from sights and sounds, and the chapel must be traversed to reach its perfect seclusion. The windows received light from a court, walled round, and closed to curious view by a deep and impervious shrubbery of laurels and evergreen oaks. In this sequestered part of the castle, its master loved to pass his mornings; and how could he suppose his wishes, nay, almost commands, were of non-effect? Sir Foster was not seen at his table — his name was rarely mentioned at Wetheral—no visiting-ticket met his eye—no allusion was made to recent visits on the part of his family—every thing appeared regular and in its usual order. Sir John was, therefore, calm, and almost oblivious to the existence of Sir Foster Kerrison. This was most favourable to his lady's schemes.

For three weeks, consecutively, this order of things continued; and only once, during that period, did Sir John meet Sir Foster within the

domain of Wetheral; which was, of course, attributed to an anxiety to see his daughter. Under that impression, Sir John hastened to do him honour; and, on the morning in question, he ushered Sir Foster into the boudoir himself, with the politeness and consideration due to a gentleman, and a fond father visiting a beloved child.

Astonishment was depicted in his countenance, when he beheld his guest, *sans céremonie*, take possession of the lounging chair, and, after placing his hat upon a work-table, begin, as was his wont, to hum an air and tap his boot, without offering a word of compliment, or even addressing the daughter he had ridden four miles to see. There was something extraordinary, he fancied, in the quiet smile bestowed upon Sir Foster by Lady Wetheral, and he was much displeased at Miss Kerrison's sudden movement to examine her father's pockets, without bestowing a word of filial obeisance to a parent she had not seen for some weeks; yet did the truth escape his unsuspicious mind. It never entered into his heart to believe his expressed resolutions were unheeded. His good taste was shocked at the style of Sir Foster's entrance into a lady's sitting-room, and he did not remain to endure its continuance. He retired again to his study;

At breakfast, on the eventful morning, Lady Wetheral issued her orders to the butler—

"When Sir Foster Kerrison comes, show him into the drawing-room."

Sir Foster was shown into the drawing-room, accordingly.

END OF VOL. I.

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THE

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BY THE AUTHOR OF

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THE

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CHAPTER XII.

Sir Foster Kerrison's entrance into the great drawing-room at Wetheral was an epoch in its annals. It was the precursor of stirring matter. Lady Wetheral received him with great amenity of manner; and any other gentleman might have perceived a look of anxious care in her eyes. Sir Foster, however, saw nothing; he did not even observe that her ladyship was alone. Habit directed him to a seat in the direction of the lounging-chair, which stood in the boudoir, and when his hat was placed upon a table, there was nothing to interfere with his *dolce far niente*. Sir Foster sat down, tapping his boot and winking his eye, in happy ignorance of coming events.

Lady Wetheral allowed some little time to elapse in silence, ere she commenced proceedings; but, when Sir Foster had taken root, and looked steadily deposited for three hours at least, the case was gently opened. Lady Wetheral drew near, and seated herself opposite her neighbour.

"Sir Foster Kerrison, I beg your attention for a few moments."

Sir Foster made no reply, but a rather quickened tapping of the boot assured her she was heard. Miss Kerrison had innocently enough supplied the key to her father's meaning, and movements.

"Perhaps, my dear Sir Foster, you are somewhat surprised at the absence of Lucy and Clara."

Sir Foster looked round the room, and smiled.

"Clara is not allowed to return again to your society, my dear Sir Foster, for very essential and painful reasons." Lady Wetheral paused, but she might have continued *ad libitum* for hours: Sir Foster neither perceived the absence of his daughter and Clara, nor understood the drift of her remarks. Lady Wetheral's quickness detected at once the obtuseness of her companion; she perceived the uselessness of

hints and sighs, and broken sentences, in the present instance. Tom Pynsent yielded at once to their influence, but Sir Foster required a *coup de main* to rouse his feelings and attention. Another line of conduct was therefore chosen.

"Sir Foster Kerrison, you have behaved very ill to my daughter!"

"God bless me!" cried Sir Foster, almost starting. "Eh! what?"

"If your intentions are not honourable, Sir Foster Kerrison, I, as a mother, demand a change of conduct on your part."

"Lucy ill, or any thing?" demanded Sir Foster, in surprise.

"*Miss Kerrison* is well," replied Lady Wetheral, with emphasis.

"Oh, umph!"

Sir Foster sank again comfortably into the arm-chair.

Provoking man! Was there no way of chaining such a creature? Her ladyship's patience was inexhaustible. Perhaps a still more decided manner might effect the purpose. Lady Wetheral took a high tone.

"Sir Foster Kerrison, the neighbourhood have reported you are addressing my daughter. I wish to know if you are aware of this report:

Miss Wetheral shall not be trifled with, Sir Foster!"

The tapping increased in velocity, and Sir Foster's eye winked with prodigious rapidity. Her ladyship became gradually more resolute and parental.

"If my child is to be made wretched, Sir Foster Kerrison, a mother's offended heart will urge its claims to be heard, and her lips will express its horror at such baseness. She will tell you how detestably wicked it is to come, day after day, and sit hours, with an innocent, trusting girl, who fondly believes there is truth and honour in your soul. No parent can mistake the aim of your visits, Sir Foster, but I will know if it is meant in honour. I will hear no base apologies, no wicked evasions — is my daughter to be Lady Kerrison, or is she to pine away in solitary, unrequited attachment? Is Miss Wetheral to become pointed at as a refused and melancholy picture of disappointed love; or is my lovely Clara to be your happy, affectionate wife, Sir Foster Kerrison?" The lady's voice sounded agitated and heart-broken at the conclusion of her speech.

Sir Foster looked bewildered. He heard the epithets "base" and "wicked," without com-

prehending their purport, or having a connecting idea of the sentences which fell from Lady Wetheral's lips with such voluble earnestness. He only heard distinctly the concluding words, "Is my lovely Clara to be your happy, affectionate wife, Sir Foster?" and he replied with quiet nonchalance,

"If you please—oh yes—eh, what?"

Lady Wetheral smiled very complacently as she rose from her seat.

"You have made me very happy, by proposing for my Clara, dear Sir Foster, and we will now return into the boudoir."

Lady Wetheral talked all the way from the drawing-room into her boudoir, while Sir Foster followed, humming and staring, perfectly aware something had happened, yet not quite awake to its nature.

"I am delighted our little society is not to be broken up, my dear Sir Foster: *now*, you know, every thing will continue in its own charming routine — you will be in your arm-chair now every day, as a thing of course. Sit down, dear Sir Foster; I will open this window; the spring flowers are early and delicious this season. I perceive Lucy and Clara walking in the garden. Ah, I see you have

taken possession of your old seat, dear Sir Foster."

Miss Kerrison and Clara were quickly at the door of the boudoir. Clara had seen the signal; the window was at last thrown open.

"Lucy, Lucy, your father is come; let us return to the house," she cried, hastily retracing her steps. Lucy followed instinctively.

"Lucy Kerrison," said Lady Wetheral, taking her hand the moment she appeared, "I have very extraordinary news for you! how are you inclined to receive a mother-in-law, my dear love!"

"Are *you* going to marry papa?" asked Lucy Kerrison, in extremity of surprise.

"No, my love; Sir John is in excellent health in his study," replied her ladyship, smiling.

"Oh yes, how foolish! I forgot; but I fancied you in earnest, and I could only think of yourself, Lady Wetheral. Papa, are you going to be married? Oh, don't marry! pray, don't marry, papa, and I will return to Ripley with you: but it's only a joke, is it papa?" and poor Lucy Kerrison became very pale.

"My dear love, you really tremble; but I assure you there is no need of any alarm. You will not fear Clara as a new relation: you will lead a very easy life with Clara, my dear Lucy!

Your papa has proposed for Clara, my dear young friend. Are you sorry?"

Lucy Kerrison seated herself in perfect silence and astonishment. Lady Wetheral resumed.

"Clara, my love, Sir Foster has decided upon taking away my companion: he has asked for you to ornament and enliven Ripley, my love. How can I refuse Sir Foster Kerrison; and yet how can I part with my only child, my only companion, since the marriage of Mrs. Tom Pynsent and Lady Ennismore!"

Miss Kerrison fixed her gaze upon Clara and her father alternately, but she did not speak: her ideas were too confused to admit of speech, and she watched in stupid amazement the scene that was passing before her. Lady Wetheral approached Sir Foster, leading Clara.

"Rise, man of happy fortunes, and receive the boon I tender to you according to your wishes. Make my child happy, and I must reluctantly consider myself fortunate in giving her to a good, indulgent man, such as Sir Foster Kerrison."

Sir Foster was noted for taciturnity, and inveterate absence of mind, in society; but he was not an absolute fool, and he was a great admirer of beauty. He had a strong suspicion in his

mind that a young lady was on the point of being forced upon him; but he hated altercation, and the lady was young and particularly handsome; besides, Lady Wetheral was insisting upon it, he had made proposals, and it was useless to contend. Sir Foster therefore rose and bowed very gallantly — considering it was Sir Foster; and that bow recognised and authorised the whole affair. Lady Wetheral's care was ended upon Clara's matrimonial prospects.

Miss Kerrison at length found words to express her deep surprise, and indeed pleasure, considering her father really meant to marry; but she confessed the thing was a mystery to her; she had seen no attention on her father's part to Clara—never! As to his sitting three hours every day at Wetheral, that was nothing—he did so at many places. She never saw any liking on Clara's part either—altogether, it was the oddest piece of courtship she had ever seen or read of.

Sir Foster having bowed and reseated himself, heard all his daughter's remarks in silence. He smiled and tapped his boot fast, which always denoted concurrence, or was a symptom of pleasure as far as it went; therefore, Miss Kerrison continued.

"I am sure, papa, you only visit here as you *did* at Hatton and Lidham, and in Shrewsbury; you never made love to Miss Wycherly or Miss Spottiswoode; did you? And you never spoke to, or looked at Clara that I could see? I cannot make it all out! I am sure, Clara, you would have mentioned it to me if you had liked papa, or if you thought papa liked you. I never shall understand it. Are you going to marry soon, papa?"

"All in good time, my dear Lucy," replied Lady Wetheral, pleased with the admirable issue of her scheme; "there are many little things to be done before Clara can be given up to you. You, my dear Lucy, must be my daughter when Clara goes to Ripley; you must stay with me then, at poor lonely Wetheral."

"My dear Lady Wetheral, I will often come to see you, but I am sure Clara will require my assistance some time at Ripley. You don't know how particular papa is in eating! Clara will be some time finding out what papa likes, and till then!—oh, Clara, till then!" Miss Kerrison lifted up her hands and eyes. Sir Foster only smiled at his daughter's insinuation; he never offered to excuse or remove the implied hint from the minds of his fair one, or her

mother. Miss Kerrison proceeded with lively energy,—

"Oh, Clara, I am very glad you mean to marry papa, though I never shall understand how it was brought about. I shall be released from managing the establishment, which I do not like. I hope you will get money from papa for every thing; I can assure you I had dreadful work to squeeze out a few pounds, and the fishmonger is my abhorrence: papa and the fishmonger have pretty scenes together!"

Sir Foster Kerrison chuckled, and winked his eye with nervous rapidity.

"Yes, papa, you may laugh, but the fishmonger did not. Do you know, Clara, papa kicked the man and his basket of soles and salmon out of the kitchen, and down the drive at Ripley."

Another chuckle betrayed the delight Sir Foster felt at the recollection of his prowess. Lady Wetheral however thought it politic to close the subject.

"Tradespeople are very tiresome, my dear Lucy, and it requires a particular degree of patience to deal with itinerant fish-people. I don't wonder at your poor father losing temper. One moment, my love, if you please."

She rose and quitted the boudoir, followed by Miss Kerrison, who accompanied her to the breakfast-room. Her ladyship then expressed and explained her wishes.

"My dear Lucy, it was time to have mercy upon your father and his bride elect, therefore I begged you to withdraw. They must have a *tête-à-tête*, poor things, to explain their feelings and inquire into each other's habits and tastes. And now, my love, since events have unfolded themselves so rapidly this morning, I must counsel and advise with you. I think it prudent that you should return to Ripley this morning, Lucy; therefore the carriage shall be at your service in two hours." Tears rushed into Lucy Kerrison's eyes.

"You know, my dear love, a separation *now* is merely a few hours' absence; something more to smile at than weep over — perhaps a day or two, not more. You are aware of your good father's infirmity, Lucy; and I trust to your good sense and kindness to remind him occasionally of his engagement; you understand me, my love."

"Yes, but papa forgets so sadly. After all, he may go off, and sit three hours at Lidham again; and how can I detain him, Lady Wetheral?"

"Circumstances are very different, my love! Yet I do not say Sir Foster may not require a little prompting *sometimes;* his absence of mind is certainly a disease: perhaps, if you withheld his cane, or concealed his coat — Pelham, you know, might be let into the secret, to watch his master; or, if you sent a message by him, to freshen his recollection; but you will do every thing well, I am sure, my love; — no one more *au fait* and clever than Lucy Kerrison."

Thus flattered and counselled, Miss Kerrison undertook to watch her father's whereabout, and Pelham was to be instructed to turn his master's thoughts every morning to his regular ride towards Wetheral. With these "advices" upon her mind, poor Lucy was consigned to the carriage, bearing with her many delightful compliments and invitations to consider Wetheral her second home—many pleasing anticipations of the future — and much triumph that another was going to undertake the management of Ripley, her father's violence, and the frightful contests between himself and the fishmonger.

Clara assured her mother, when Sir Foster had departed, "that though the *tête-à-tête* had not been a chatty affair, yet such taciturnity proved a very quiet, mild character, which would suit

her own warmth of temper. She was very content to be Lady Kerrison, and have Lucy for a companion. Sir Foster loved quiet, therefore he would not interfere with her tastes, or quarrel with her actions. She and Lucy would enjoy themselves, and perhaps be a great deal from home." Lady Wetheral quite acquiesced in Clara's prognostics; there was only one little affair to get over, and *that* would soften by time and reason, she trusted.

"I mean your father's objection, my love; I dare say he will be horrified at first, because he fancies Sir Foster a little warm in his temper."

"I don't believe he is warm-tempered," replied Clara, haughtily. "If I don't complain, no one need make any objection."

"Exactly so, my love; who can possibly judge of another's tastes? What I consider impetuous, another person may think simply vivacious, and so on. I think, my love, we will not say any thing to your father just now; suppose we allow the subject to remain in abeyance for a few days? Sir John has such very narrow views of worldly advantages; such peculiarly contracted notions upon the luxuries of life."

Clara differed from Lady Wetheral. She considered it better sense to state the circumstance

at once to her father, since he must become a principal in the affair sooner or later. She would herself inform him of Sir Foster's proposal, and if his objections were not to be reasoned with, she must act for herself.

Such was Clara's determination, and such the intrepidity of her temper at sixteen years of age. Ungovernable in feeling, and haughty in disposition, she held powerful sway over her mother's mind; but it was yet to be proved whether her father also would yield to her domineering and intractable spirit. Lady Wetheral shrunk from the combat which must ensue between parental authority and filial disobedience; it would be a combat far surpassing the skirmish which preceded Lady Ennismore's engagement, for her husband had seen the error of his frequent compliance with her wishes, and his commands had been peremptory in the matter of Sir Foster Kerrison.

Clara's high spirit would not stoop to commit her mother, by acknowledging her active management in procuring the proposal, but it might transpire that she had a deep share in its contrivance; and she dreaded the calm bitterness of her husband's reproaches. Clara's temper was equal to a thousand storms, and a thousand un-

toward events: "Clara therefore must fight her own battle; she was fully equipped for the war of words which must ensue, and her lofty spirit scorned the alarms which subjugated meaner and more timid minds." Clara only smiled in contempt at her mother's reasoning.

Sir John inquired at dinner what had become of his young and agreeable friend Miss Kerrison, who had so suddenly disappeared. His lady's reply was perfectly satisfactory, and precluded all further remark: "Miss Kerrison had been summoned home by Sir Foster." The dinner passed in harmony, and on Sir John's part, with more than his usual vivacity. He seemed to feel relieved by the absence of all associations connected with Ripley. How little did he anticipate the blow which awaited the withdrawal of the servants, to fall heavily upon his heart!

Clara opened her subject with the indifference of a person who had quite made up their mind to all consequences, and dared every opposition; she raised her wine-glass to sip its contents with consummate nonchalance, and coolly commenced her disclosure.

"Papa, I think it right to inform you of any material step which I may take, therefore I beg to tell you I have accepted Sir Foster Kerrison."

Sir John appeared for a moment stunned. Clara resumed—

"Sir Foster Kerrison pleases me; and, though my tastes may clash with others, I alone am judge of what will make me happy; therefore, I have resolved to marry Sir Foster, papa."

Sir John's eyes were fixed upon his lady's face in silence. She read their expression, and shrunk under its deep meaning. A flood of tears fortunately relieved the painful sense of self-upbraiding, and proved a fruitful theme by which to evade the subject so galling to her husband's mind.

"Really, Sir John, I am so enfeebled by constant flurry of mind, and my poor dear girls' marriages, that a word or a look throws me into fits of nervousness. I cannot imagine why you should stare at me in that odd way, when I never could endure a fixed gaze; particularly when my spirits are low, and my nerves so shaken."

"Clara," said her father, calmly, "what events have led to your acceptance of Sir Foster? when did you accept him, and where have you met him since your sisters' nuptials? Tell me candidly how all this has happened."

"Oh! yes, certainly, papa. Sir Foster has been visiting me here some time."

"I never saw him, or heard of the visit, Clara," replied Sir John, mildly.

"You are always in your study, papa. People seldom ask for you now," was Clara's observation, as she helped herself to preserved strawberries with perfect coolness of manner.

"Gertrude," said Sir John, "you have concealed all this from me, and disobeyed my strong injunctions to allow no intimacy with Sir Foster Kerrison. Since my wife persists in opposing me, I cannot be surprised at a child defying me."

"I never asked Sir Foster to Wetheral," faltered the lady; "his visits were not the consequences of any invitation from me; you have never seen him here, my love: I never ventured to ask him to dinner: I never held out an inducement to attract him here. It has been Sir Foster's own act and deed to propose to my daughter; and his calling occasionally was very natural, while Lucy staid with us. You brought him in yourself one day; but really all this violent altercation destroys my nerves, and undermines my health." Lady Wetheral sunk back in her chair, closed her eyes, and applied her vinaigrette.

Sir John was silent for some moments, as if his thoughts and feelings were too powerful to

produce utterance. Clara did not, or would not, perceive his emotion; she continued eating her biscuit and strawberries with calm unconcern, not at all disconcerted by the deep silence which followed her mother's speech. Sir John at length rose, and, with great solemnity of tone and manner, addressed his youngest daughter, who was seated a silent spectator of the whole scene.

"Chrystal, it is time for me to take some steps towards removing you from such examples. I shall accompany you to Brierly to-morrow, and place you, for the present, under Boscawen's care. He will take charge of you till I can claim you in peace. When I have deposited you in safety, I shall remove from Wetheral for ever. Your mother and sister will accompany me into Scotland, as I shall reside in future at Fairlee."

Nothing could exceed Lady Wetheral's terror at these words, spoken so calmly and so decidedly. She rushed towards her husband, and seized his arm with nervous trepidation.

"Don't go into Scotland, John! oh, don't go there, to horrid Fairlee! I shall die there—no, no; say you will not take me from Wetheral, and I will promise any thing, John!" Her ladyship's alarm became very powerful, and she sank to the ground. Christobelle would have flown

to the bell to summon Thompson, but her father forbade the action; he begged that such scenes might never be disclosed to the eyes of the household. He raised her, and laid her on a sofa, but it was some time ere her senses returned. She wandered evidently for some hours in her conversation, and was at length placed in bed, under the influence of a powerful narcotic. Christobelle watched by her as she slept.

Sir John Wetheral felt all this most painfully; but he was now awake to the weakness of his conduct in placing such implicit confidence in his lady's system of education; he felt too late how indolently he had succumbed to her tears and reproaches against his own better judgment, even to the sacrifice of Julia; and now he was resolved to save Clara, at the risk of sacrificing for ever all future hopes of domestic felicity. Her ladyship's fearful apprehensions of Fairlee threatened an illness: but Sir John was firmly resolved to quit Shropshire; to leave at once the scene of deception which irritated his mind; to save, if possible, the fate which awaited Clara, should her evil genius give her into the power of Sir Foster Kerrison.

Christobelle was still watching in her mother's room, when she opened her eyes, and faintly

called for Thompson. Christobelle did not reply, but walked softly to the side of her bed, to inquire how she felt after her long sleep. Her eyes were heavy, for she closed them as she spoke.

"Is that you, Thompson? I have had such horrible dreams: your master is going into Scotland, and poor Miss Clara will be taken away from Sir Foster, after all my trouble."

"It is me, mamma," whispered Christobelle.

"Well, well," replied her mother, petulantly, "never mind who it is, you are equally included in this dreadful Fairlee business. I shall never live to reach Scotland: the dullness of the place —no neighbourhood—all old married men—not a match there fit for Clara — altogether it will kill me."

A silence of some moments ensued, and she spoke again in low complaining tones.

"Your poor father's violence has made me seriously ill, Bell, and he must lay my death at his own door. Sir Foster has been extremely ill used, and all the neighbourhood will think so, after his proposal being accepted, and his attachment made so public! My poor child Clara! it is very cruel by her, and the affair has broken my heart."

There was again a pause, so continued, that Christobelle believed her mother slept; at last she heard her name pronounced.

"Bell."

"Yes, mamma, I am close to you."

"Perhaps, Bell, as you have influence with your father, you can find out his intentions with respect to Sir Foster. I can't think he would break off such a match, but I am too unwell to enter upon the subject with him now. Go down, Bell, and manage your father, as I used to do, only bring me some intelligence."

"Shall I ask the question for you, mamma?"

"Don't be stupid, Bell; ask questions? Nonsense! You will never get the truth from man by a direct question, foolish child. You know what I mean; now go and glean his intentions with cleverness; it will be practice for you; there, no reply, Bell; no sentimentality; I detest it!"

Christobelle left the room, not quite comprehending her mother's words. She could not understand the "gleaning," neither did she know the meaning of the word "sentimentality," but she went to her father's study, and found him in his arm-chair, the candles standing before him unsnuffed. It was nearly twelve o'clock when

she entered. Her father held out his hand, and drew her to him.

"You are still up, my child, and it is very late."

She told him her mother had slept long, and was very anxious to know whether he really intended to quit Wetheral.

"Your mamma sent you to inquire, my love?"

She hesitated. "No, papa, not to inquire; mamma forbade my asking questions."

"What *were* you to do, then, Chrystal, since your mother wished to know my sentiments?"

Christobelle hesitated again. She was not prepared for this close investigation.

"Chrystal, whenever you speak, let it be strictly in truth, and with open-heartedness; God and your father, my child, hate insincerity, and untrue lips; speak without fear, and without evasion. What is this all about?"

Christobelle became alarmed at her father's grave observation, and lost all presence of mind; she repeated at once her mother's injunction.

"Papa, I was told to glean your intentions, without sentimentality, that was all; only I don't know what 'glean' means."

"Go to bed, now, my dear child, and I will visit your mother," said her father, in a melan-

choly tone of voice, which surprised her. "You and I have a journey before us, Chrystal; the day after to-morrow we shall set out for Brierly; you will be useful to Isabel, and improved by Boscawen's society and tastes. Good night, and go to your bed, my love."

She went to her room, and slept soundly, innocent of wrong, and ignorant of the scene which took place in her mother's room, in consequence of her unfortunate disclosure. Christobelle was summoned to Lady Wetheral's bed-side after breakfast; Clara was seated reading near the window, and a small table covered with essence-bottles told her at a glance there had been strife. Christobelle was accosted with much irony.

"Peacemakers are desirable people, Bell, and, doubtless, your heart is enjoying the harmony you have created; pray advance, and behold your delightful work. Am I quite as miserable as you wish, Christobelle? or have you any little poisoned arrow to apply, by way of completing my distress? Pray do me the honour to inform me what my next annoyance shall be!"

Christobelle stood in astonishment; her mother was very seldom bitter in her remarks.

"I suppose you are not aware you have procured the dismissal of Sir Foster Kerrison, and

may, probably, be the cause of your sister taking strong steps to assert herself. I suppose you are not aware you have made her and myself wretched, by your stupid matter of fact!"

Lady Wetheral laid down her salts bottle, and took up the vinaigrette; Christobelle could only weep, and plead ignorance of all intention of offending.

"Well, there's no help, now," continued her mother, changing her tone, and resuming the language of complaint. "You have done mischief, and you must endeavour to repair it. Your father intends to see Sir Foster to-day, and I am too ill to interfere; he will be violent, I dare say, for he has quite changed his nature, and his violence to me lately has been extraordinary; I know he will forget himself, and offend Sir Foster. Now, Bell, you must manage to place a slip of paper in Sir Foster's hand as he leaves the room, and do not make such mistakes as you generally contrive to do with your horrible matter of fact ways."

"There is no occasion for any slip of paper," observed Clara, without raising her eyes from the book she held before her.

"My dear Clara, yes!" said her mother, in an earnest tone.

"I choose to manage my own affairs," was Clara's quiet reply.

"But, my love, my dear Clara, remember Sir Foster's wretched memory! he requires some management!"

"I shall attend to all that is necessary," replied Clara.

"Well, my love, I ask no questions; indeed, I have no wish to interfere; I have done all *I* could do, in bringing Sir Foster to propose, and you must guard your own property now. I ask no questions; we will ask no questions, Bell; we will not be curious. I have neither eyes nor ears, Clara; I have only sunny thoughts, bright visions of Lady Kerrison presiding at Ripley, in spite of appearances; but, Bell, you must be blind: with all your might, remember; no more mistakes, if you please, and you may be of some use; you are too old to affect ignorance now, and I cannot excuse it."

Christobelle was in a tremor; for the sentences which flowed in such profusion from her mother's lips, conveyed no meaning to her mind; she was anxious to do right, but no distinct line of conduct had been pointed out; she told her mother steadily, yet in considerable alarm, that she did not know what was meant.

"I dare say not, Bell; your ideas are as limited as your poor father's, and I can imagine your influence over his mind must be very extensive—the confluence of dullness and stupidity. However, Bell, you can, probably, comprehend what I mean, when I command you to keep all you see and hear to yourself."

"Yes, mamma, I can do that."

"Very well. If you find Sir Foster Kerrison at any time about the premises, don't see him; and, whatever may take place around you, be ignorant of all things. Can you do this?"

"I will not say any thing to papa, unless he asks a question," replied Christobelle, quite assured in mind that she was giving satisfaction at last; her mother did not join her in opinion.

"Nonsense, folly! you have not common sense to guide you through life, child. Thank Heaven, the burden of procuring *you* an establishment will not be upon my shoulders! Your father must manage that affair as he pleases; he takes the whole management of you upon himself. Your wretched matter-of-fact ways would traverse all my plans for your benefit."

Christobelle was wrong again! She never could understand her mother's innuendoes, and she told her so, though she trembled as the words

fell hesitating from her lips. She told her, also, that she could not comprehend the epithet "matter-of-fact," which she continually used with reference to her conduct. Alas! the explanation was to the artless girl equally unintelligible.

"You have no capacity, Bell, or you would understand the meaning of that expression. Your sisters were not matter-of-fact, unless, perhaps, Mrs. Tom Pynsent might be considered so; but time would have improved her; *you* are past hope. Nothing is so matter-of-fact, as believing every thing you hear, and answering questions point-blank. Nothing can be so cruelly matter-of-fact, as telling people exactly what you think, and making remarks upon people's movements. I believe matter-of-fact is born with you, and I can perceive no intuition, no tact in your manners, by which to imagine a germ might be fostered by practice. You will be very like your grand aunt, Bell, and like her, too, you will live single. I have no hopes from such mental poverty."

Clara appeared absorbed in her book, for she never raised her eyes, or joined in the conversation which related to her sister. After her haughtily expressed determination to be guided

by her own judgment, she remained silent, nor did she apparently hear a word that passed between her mother and Christobelle. Time was, certainly, fostering the "germ" of resolution in Clara's breast; and now that circumstances and events developed her character, it was easy to see she had shaken off all restraints, and intended to hold the reins in her own youthful and inexperienced hands. Lady Wetheral felt her power was no more, if it had ever existed, over Clara's opinions and conduct; and she detained her youngest daughter to listen to her grievances.

"Altogether, Bell, what with your dullness, and Clara's temper, I have never been happy since your sisters married. I have endured a great deal from your father's violence, too, lately; last night he was indescribably violent, and I am sinking into ill-health. He is resolved Clara shall not be Lady Kerrison, and he has ordered the poor dear man to be shown into the study when he calls to-day. Do be there, Bell, and report the whole affair; you surely have just capacity for that?"

"Report *nothing*," said Clara, without raising her eyes from her book.

"My dear Clara, you really shock me!" Her mother laid down her vinaigrette, and took up

the eau-de-luce. "My dear girl, you frighten me with such abrupt and alarming sentences. Do you not intend to marry Sir Foster Kerrison?"

"Of course I do," replied Clara, haughtily.

"Then, my love, why do you forbid Bell reporting his interview with your father?"

"I hate all that nonsense and tale-bearing; let Bell alone; why is she to be taught eavesdropping?"

"Really, Clara, you are becoming quite harsh. I certainly never taught any of you to do wrong, unless procuring the best alliances for you all is considered an injury. I cannot approve your remark, my dear love, at all."

Miss Wetheral did not reply.

"I cannot make out Clara's temper, Bell," whispered her mother, "there is nothing to be *got at* in her; I never can have any influence, when I particularly wish to point her attention to circumstances; however, I must let her take her own way, for she means to marry Sir Foster, I see, and my mind is fixed upon that match. Well, I shall rise, now, but I am seriously ill from your father's imperious conduct last night."

"I am very sorry, mamma."

"Sorry! Yes, it was your stupid folly which

caused such an unprovoked attack. When Clara marries, I shall visit my dear Julia: her situation, so exalted, and the novelty of a new neighbourhood, will amuse me. You can take care of Sir John while I am absent. Perhaps, Bell, I may see some young man who may do for you some six years hence."

"No, I thank you, mamma."

"Oh, do not be alarmed," exclaimed Lady Wetheral, a little indignantly, "I am not going to trouble myself about your fortunes. You can return to the study: don't tumble over the chairs, Bell. You are at that awkward, ugly age, all legs and wings—there, get you gone."

Christobelle was very well pleased to escape, for she ever dreaded a summons to her mother's apartments. She might be awkward, and her countenance might be displeasing, but her father never alluded to personal appearance. His voice breathed accents of kindness and affection, and he only taught her to be good and dutiful. To his study she retired, as to the home of her happiness, and she was there when Sir Foster Kerrison was announced, according to Sir John's orders. Lucy Kerrison had kept her word—she had indeed reminded her father of his *devoir* at Wetheral Castle.

Sir Foster stood somewhat bewildered, at his entrance: he had been marshalled to the right instead of the left, upon alighting, and he was now ushered into a large room filled with books, instead of work-baskets and ladies. Altogether, without the trouble of reasoning upon the matter, or exactly perceiving how things were, Sir Foster felt something was different from what it had been: the chain of daily events at Wetheral was broken; he had got into a different line of action, without knowing why, or how it had been effected. Sir Foster's embarrassment, however, was only perceived in the nervous motion of his eye, and the tapping of his boot; for, in despite of the unhappy absence of mind, which indolence had nurtured, and which ever produced ridicule, his manners were those of an eccentric but polite man.

Sir John Wetheral received him with gravity, but with kindness, and, after a few observations had passed upon the state of crops and the weather, he commenced the subject near his heart. Sir Foster sat in silent reverie while Sir John poured forth his regret at an engagement having been entered into with his daughter without his concurrence; he spoke feelingly upon the deception which had surrounded that engage-

ment, and expressed his entire disapproval of the match. Sir Foster smiled and winked, as allusion was made to the known violence of his temper; and he tapped his boot with rapid strokes, when Sir John professed his more powerful objections arose from his constant absence at the house of prayer.—"If," he said, "a man cared not to pray to his Maker, he would never heed the happiness of a creature committed to his care; and he would rather follow his child to the grave, than give her to a man who had no respect to earthly or heavenly things—whose passions were violent, and whose faith was unsettled."

Sir Foster had nothing to say in extenuation, if he really understood the purport of the address; but he looked perfectly innocent of all charges, or of having attached any meaning to the sounds which reached his ear. Sir John remembered Sir Foster's besetting sin, and accosted him again with decision, as Lady Wetheral had done in a similar situation, though upon a different subject.

"Sir Foster, I forbid your visits to my daughter Clara."

Sir Foster raised his eyebrows, but he understood the sentence: it was clear and concise.

"Eh?—yes, certainly, if Lady Wetheral does not mind."

"I am afraid, sir, Lady Wetheral has given you encouragement in this affair."

"Umph!—ah!—yes; something of that sort."

"I must insist upon ending the engagement, Sir Foster."

"Eh!—what? Yes, if you like."

There was a silence for some moments; it was broken by Sir Foster, in apparently complete forgetfulness of the preceding subject.

"Boscawen keep his blood mare?"

Sir John smiled, as he replied in the affirmative. Sir Foster began to wink his eye violently.

"Give him two hundred for her."

Sir John mentioned his intended visit to Brierly, and offered to be the bearer of his message or intentions.

"Go with you."

"Ripley does not lie far out of our way; shall I call for you, Sir Foster? We shall be happy to offer you a seat in or outside the carriage, which you please."

Sir Foster smiled and hummed, which, according to Lucy Kerrison's reading, implied consent; they were therefore to have the pleasure of his company on their journey. Sir John would not

feel annoyed by the accession of a taciturn companion; Sir Foster would, at least, be out of Clara's neighbourhood, and, what was more satisfactory, he would be beyond the reach of his lady's machinations.

After this arrangement, Sir Foster remained two hours, silently smiling in his chair, without changing his position, or appearing to feel the absence of his so lately affianced bride. Once initiated in another suite of apartments, it was more than likely he would, in future, seek the study as naturally as he had made his *sederunt* in the boudoir; but the proposed journey must interfere with his plans, and force them into other channels. Brierly and the blood-mare had present possession of his memory, and, unless they sank into the oblivious depths of his lethargic mind, Sir Foster was destined to become a millstone round the energies of Mr. Boscawen, and Clara must relinquish all hope of securing her fleeting lover.

Sir John was aware of his companion's eccentric habits, therefore his studies were quietly resumed, and Sir Foster was allowed to smile and doze out his allotted time in his own peculiar way. Happiness is very differently defined by individuals: Sir Foster considered it enjoyed in

a long course of half-dreamy nothingness, seated in a soft arm-chair, tapping his boot, and not bored by questions or remarks: Mrs. Hancock and Mrs. Pynsent loved locomotion, and considered life given as a means of enjoyment in talking, walking, driving, laughing, and "fun:" Sir John Wetheral loved retirement with books: his lady confessed she delighted in matchmaking, and visiting different watering-places: yet do we know and feel happiness is not of this world; and our enjoyments prove, in the end, the high-way to trials and cares.

Sir Foster Kerrison, at length, awoke from his long calm, and put on his hat. Christobelle was reading aloud to her father, but she became silent at this moment, which denoted preparation for departure. Sir Foster did not observe this; probably he did not see them, for he rose humming an air, and, winking very nervously, looked attentively at a portrait of "Eclipse," and walked deliberately out of the study. This was Sir Foster's "odd way," and no one ever took offence at any thing Sir Foster did or said. Sir John only remarked, in his gentle way, "Clara's idea of Sir Foster's temper may not coincide with mine — a young girl cannot understand how deeply her husband's temper may implicate her

happiness—but I am astonished at her taste, in selecting a man whose manners must disgust a delicate woman, and who has already forgotten his dismissal, in anxiety to purchase a blood-mare at Brierly. I fear Clara is dazzled by motives which blind her to truth. I will take you to Brierly, my love, to-morrow: I long to get you away from this place."

When Christobelle passed through the chapel to reach her own room, she saw Clara and Sir Foster Kerrison walking in the avenue: she could not be mistaken; the chapel-window commanded the avenue, and Clara was seen distinctly. She appeared in very earnest conversation: Sir Foster led his horse by the bridle-rein, and Christobelle thought one arm was round Clara's waist. She remembered her mother's injunction "not to see" Sir Foster if she met him upon the premises; and she obeyed the spirit of her meaning, for she made no observation respecting what she had seen. Clara appeared at dinner perfectly calm and collected, and her spirits were higher than usual: she had not the pale cheek, or monumental look, which Shakespeare describes so pathetically—there was no sign that

"He she loved proved false, and did forsake her."

All was tranquil health and untamed spirits in Clara's beautiful face. Christobelle persuaded herself she could *not* have seen her sister in the avenue, and that she was yet ignorant of Sir Foster's intention to accompany them to Brierly, and bid high for the blood-mare. When the family separated for the night, Lady Wetheral coolly wished her youngest daughter a happy meeting with her friends at Brierly: she should not be up, and begged Christobelle would not rattle at her door with her awkward fingers, under pretence of leave-taking. She was to give her love to Mrs. Boscawen, and bid her remember the baize-door for the nursery.

Clara advanced and kissed her sister: she spoke laughingly.

"You need not visit my room, Bell, to-morrow, because I shall be very busy; but I wish you lots of happiness, if there is such material at Brierly. How long do you remain?"

"Papa says, till you are all at Fairlee."

"Oh, well, a happy meeting to us all at Fairlee; but, Bell, before we meet again,

> 'I'm o'er the border, and awa'
> Wi' Jock o' Hasledean!'

You don't understand me? Never mind—I don't

think I shall like Fairlee. How you stare, Miss Bell!"

Christobelle did look surprised: she could not understand Clara's gaiety upon her lover's dismissal. She retired to her room, however, and lost all recollections, in deep and sweet slumber, both of the past and present.

CHAPTER XIII.

Sir John Wetheral and Christobelle were speedily on their road to Ripley. The morning air was fresh and delicious, for May was on its threshold, and April had passed in smiles. The father's countenance beamed with pleasure, for he was conferring happiness—and his daughter was revelling in delight, because she was rolling towards Isabel, and should enjoy hours of amusement with the kind and patient Mr. Boscawen. All nature smiled under her eager eye, and she fancied the woods of Ripley even more beautiful than the grounds of Wetheral. They turned from the high road, through the great gates of Ripley Park, and wound for nearly two miles by the side of a lake, magnificent in her estimation at that time, and lovely in its stillness, now. The grey towers of Ripley burst upon the sight, as they turned rapidly from the beautiful sheet

of water to enter the deep shrubbery which led to its entrance, and Christobelle could not help exclaiming—"Oh, papa, how beautiful this is!"

"Yes, Christobelle, it is lovely; and all, save the spirit of man, is divine," replied her father, patting her shoulder.

"That was a quotation, papa, from Lord Byron, which you read to me yesterday. Oh, see what a collection of beautiful plants are ranged in the conservatory!"

Christobelle was engrossed with the sight of the numerous flowering shrubs, when the carriage stopped, and four servants advanced to the hall-door. Sir John inquired if their master was at home.

Sir Foster had been from home since half-past five o'clock that morning.

"When was he expected to return?"

Sir Foster had left no orders or directions.

"Surely," said Sir John, "Sir Foster has forgotten our engagement, and has set off to Brierly alone. Is Miss Kerrison at home?"

Miss Kerrison was walking in the park—should they send her information of Sir John Wetheral's arrival?

"By no means. Sir Foster is probably gone to Brierly; but, if your master returns from else-

where, inform him I am on the road to Bridgnorth." Sir John ordered the postillions to proceed.

They drove back, towards the park gates, and met Miss Kerrison, at the head of her little troop of brothers and sisters. The carriage stopped at their approach, and Lucy Kerrison's eyes sparkled with pleasure.

"Are you come for *me*, Sir John? Has Lady Wetheral sent for *me*, by your early visit?"

The expression of her face clouded over, when she learned their destination; but she could not enlighten her friends upon Sir Foster's flight. Lucy said, "her father did such odd things, that no one at Ripley ever knew where he was. Sometimes he was here, and sometimes he was there — he had left the house very early, which was rather an event of novelty, as he seldom rose before eleven; but she was sure her father did not know himself where he was going, and no one else could guess." With this unsatisfactory intelligence, Sir John and Christobelle were obliged to take leave of Miss Kerrison, and pursue their route. Sir John persisted in supposing Sir Foster far on his way towards Brierly. Christobelle, on the other hand, felt an undefinable assurance that he was gone to visit

Clara. The subject, however, faded soon from the mind of each; and Sir John cheered the remainder of the drive, by pleasant tales, and affectionate questionings upon subjects they had read together.

Isabel screamed with joy at her father and sister's arrival. She was walking up and down before their door, holding her husband's arm, when the carriage suddenly appeared before them. She rushed to the door, ere the servant could open it, and threw herself into her father's arms.

"Oh, papa, what a blessing this is! What made you think of coming to see us so soon? and pray let Chrystal remain with me for some months, now she is here. Oh, papa, this is such a happiness! such a comfort!" Isabel threw her arms round her sister's neck, and wept.

"Well, Chrystal, you see I am crying; but it's for joy to see you both at Brierly. I hope you will stay a long time! My dear papa, come in, and refresh yourself before dinner;—and, Chrystal, you will be such a dear companion to me!"

Mr. Boscawen waited till the raptures were ended, and then he welcomed them to Brierly, with the kindness which ever made him agree-

able to those he esteemed. The meeting on all sides was most delightful in feeling, and they entered the house, full of smiles and mutual content. Isabel stood for a moment in the hall, and looked at her husband.

"Mr. Boscawen, I am going to take my sister up stairs, into my room—is that right?"

"Certainly, my love, do so; the half-hour bell will ring in a few minutes."

Isabel seated herself, when they had gained her dressing-room, and drew a chair for her sister.

"Now, Chrystal, just take off your hat and shake your curls." Christobelle did so.

"Very well; now you are ready for dinner, so let us chat out the time till the bell rings, and tell me all about Wetheral. Poor Wetheral!—I often wish I was there again. Oh, Chrystal, perhaps now you are arrived, I shall not be so much with Miss Tabitha, work, work, work, all day long!—but what brought you here, without any notice? I hope every body is well?"

Christobelle gave her sister all the Wetheral news, and detailed the affairs of Clara as clearly as her young judgment would allow. Isabel was charmed.

"Well, papa was so good to prevent Clara marrying that old Sir Foster! I assure you,

Chrystal, it would have been a foolish affair. How would poor Clara have endured reading four or five hours every day, per force, with her warm temper?"

"Sir Foster never reads, Isabel."

"Ah, but he would have compelled her to read; for old men are all alike, Chrystal. You may depend upon it, Clara would have been miserable. Is Sir Foster very unhappy about it?"

Christobelle told her in confidence what she had seen as she passed through the chapel, and how cheerful Clara appeared afterwards at dinner. Isabel looked serious.

"What could that mean? I was very unhappy, I know, till papa said I should marry Mr. Boscawen. I was very silly, then; but Clara was not Lady Kerrison, therefore she did not know how very soon those things are got over, and I am surprised she was cheerful just at that time. I wonder any body marries so young, when they can do as they please at home. Don't marry, Chrystal, till you are thirty."

The great gong sounded at this moment, and Isabel rose to make a change in her dress: but she continued talking.

"I don't mind that horrible gong, to-day,

because you and papa are here; but it is always a signal to me of misery. After the gong sounds, I am sure to pass the remainder of the day with Miss Tabitha, and I am tired to death with teaching. In the morning I am learning geography and history, and the evening brings tent-stitch and lectures. I hope I shan't be obliged to learn tent-stitch while you are here."

Isabel's maid appeared, to assist her mistress.

"Oh, is that you, Mrs. Anson? Do you know if Mr. Boscawen has ordered any change in the dinner? I am sure I forgot all about it. Dear me, Anson, how hot your hands are! Well, if ever I felt such hands! Mr. Boscawen's hands are cold as ice. Just scratch out my hair, Anson. I don't care how it looks; no more will Clara, if she marries Sir ..... There is Mr. Boscawen's tap against the wall; don't you hear it? Now that tap always means that he is ready to go down, and I must hold my tongue and make haste. I am always chatting to Mrs. Anson, when you are not here, Chrystal. Come, I am ready now."

They left the dressing-room, and Mr. Boscawen appeared immediately at his door. He offered an arm to each, and they descended to the drawing-room, where Sir John was seated in

company with Miss Boscawen, who was diligently plying at a large worsted-work frame, dressed in dove-coloured silk, the whitest muslin handkerchief, and the most delicate net-cap which had ever gladdened the eye: she was indeed the *beau ideal* of an old maid. Christobelle looked with pleased astonishment at the delicate cleanliness of her person; the band of brown hair, intermingled with grey, which peeped beneath her cap—the tightly-fitting dress—her white silk mittens—the repose of her countenance, which looked smilingly upon her—all inclined Christobelle to admire and gaze upon Miss Tabitha Boscawen. Surely, this could not be the original of Isabel's gloomy description!

Christobelle's admiration amused and pleased Miss Boscawen: she rose, and held out her hand. "You are welcome," she said, "to Brierly, Miss Wetheral. Our dear Isabel will be delighted to have a companion in her work and studies."

Christobelle was charmed by the reception, and stood near Miss Boscawen, examining her work, and watching its progress. She was pleased by her young acquaintance's curiosity, for she performed her stitches very slowly, to allow time for observation. She asked Christobelle if she loved work: Christobelle told her

she should like to learn to work well, but that she was very fond of reading. She smiled.

"I shall be happy to teach you every kind of stitch, Miss Wetheral, when you are tired with books. I like to see young people employed. Every hour is valuable, and idleness is the mother of mischief, as you may remember writing in your copybook. I hope you are never idle, Miss Wetheral?"

Isabel answered for her sister.

"Oh, dear Tabitha, Chrystal is always reading history and poetry: I am astonished at her learning, for I never could bear reading or writing: I liked my doll best, and dancing with Tom Pynsent."

"We shall like one another, Miss Wetheral, I foresee," said Miss Boscawen, taking no notice of the latter part of Isabel's speech.

At dinner, Isabel sat silent. She took her seat at the head of the table, it is true; but her eyes were constantly referring to her husband, and sundry whispers from Miss Boscawen, who sat at her right hand, increased her alarm and confusion. There were some attractive glasses of raspberry-cream upon the table at the second course, to which Isabel "did seriously incline,"

and she accordingly had one placed before her. Miss Boscawen was distressed.

"Oh! sister, that is the worst thing you could eat at this time! Pray send away that cream! John, take away that cream!"

Isabel's eyes overflowed, as the cream vanished from her sight: Mr. Boscawen saw her disappointment with pity, and endeavoured to mitigate the sentence.

"Tabitha, *half* a cream will not hurt Isabel: let her try half a cream."

"Oh, brother, the very worst thing my sister could take! No, don't eat a cream, sister."

"I think," said Sir John, "as the parent of five children, I will undertake to answer for the innocence of the cream. Lady Wetheral fancied many extraordinary things, and did not suffer from their effects. I should be inclined to give Isabel that cream, Boscawen."

Mr. Boscawen appeared pleased by an opinion of some weight and experience, which coincided with his own wish to gratify his young wife: he accordingly ordered the cream to be reinstated on her plate. Isabel ate of it greedily.

"Oh, brother!" exclaimed Miss Boscawen, "sister will be so ill!"

Mr. Boscawen, however, enjoyed the eager-

ness and satisfaction with which Isabel devoured her cream. "Poor thing, poor thing!" he uttered, in a low tone, as Isabel laid down her spoon, and exclaimed, "How excellently good that was!"

"It will do you no harm, my love," said her father, as he watched her with great interest; "I will answer for your not suffering any unpleasant effects."

"Oh! Sir John," exclaimed Miss Boscawen, "creams are such very indigestible things! I am sure sister will be very poorly; indeed, brother, sister will be ill."

Christobelle now understood the meaning of poor Isabel's distress, when she complained at Wetheral, that only Miss Tabitha was to preside over her confinement. Miss Boscawen did indeed watch over her with jealous care, and, like Don Pedro Snatchaway in Sancho's suite, she allowed her victim neither to eat nor drink in peace. When the ladies retired from the dining-room, Miss Boscawen fidgeted about Isabel's seat. She was not to sit near the window—it was cold; she was not to sit near the fire — it was hot: the sofa was not quite the thing, and the chairs might make her uncomfortable. Poor Isabel looked at her sister in despair.

Miss Boscawen was equally alarmed when Isabel offered to walk round the flower-garden with Christobelle.

"Oh! sister, the sun is setting, and you will take such a cold! you have eaten a cream; pray don't take cold upon it."

The walk was given up; Isabel would chat about Wetheral.

"Now, sister, don't talk much just after your dinner; nothing does so much harm to the constitution, and so completely prevents digestion."

Well, then, they would all take a little nap.

"Won't you get very fat, sister?" asked Miss Boscawen, as she saw Isabel preparing to lie down upon the sofa; "sleep fattens very much."

Isabel, however, made her preparations, and composed herself to sleep. Christobelle sat by her with a book which she had taken from one of the tables. Miss Boscawen sat down to her worsted frame, and rang for candles. They were some time silent, when Isabel started up and exclaimed she was extremely unwell. Miss Boscawen looked horrified.

"Oh! sister, that cream! I knew you would be ill."

"I cannot tell the reason, but I am very ill. Send for Mr. Boscawen, Chrystal." Isabel

looked very pale, and was unable to rise from the sofa.

"Oh! sister, don't send for my brother; let me assist you to your room; the cream has made you sick."

"Send for Mr. Boscawen," repeated Isabel, her face becoming flushed with pain.

Mr. Boscawen was summoned, and he carried Isabel to her bed. The surprise and joy of receiving her family unexpectedly, had brought on a rather premature confinement. The medical man was sent for, the nurse was summoned in haste, all the household were in commotion. The medical attendant gave it as his opinion some surprise or alarm had hastened Mrs. Boscawen's accouchement. Miss Boscawen was convinced it was the raspberry-cream.

Sir John decided to remain at Brierly, till Isabel should be considered out of all danger, and till the little stranger should receive his blessing. All that night passed in eager hope and watching. Christobelle could not sleep; she could not rest in her bed, but remained at Isabel's door, listening to every sound and footfall till the morning dawned; and then Miss Boscawen insisted upon her going to rest again. Isabel was doing very well, considering she had

hastened every thing by eating the cream so pertinaciously, against her own better judgment; she never could digest cream herself at any period of her life; how could her sister expect to do so, when she was so near her confinement?"

Under many promises on Miss Boscawen's part not to forget her in the general confusion, Christobelle retired to her room, and slept long and soundly; when she woke again, Isabel was in safety, and the house of Boscawen rejoiced in a son and heir to succeed to its honours. Miss Boscawen brought the blessed intelligence herself, and redeemed her promise by so doing. Christobelle wanted to fly that instant to her sister, but Miss Boscawen objected. "She was too young to judge of consequences," she remarked; "she would talk too much, or laugh too loud for Isabel's nerves. She should visit her in proper time, and at proper seasons; she had just seen her father, and he had taken Master Boscawen in his arms, and pronounced him a very fine child. Isabel was now, she hoped, asleep."

Christobelle said she would rise immediately, as she wanted very much to see her father; she was surprised to learn he had quitted Brierly soon after his interview with Isabel. He would not allow Christobelle to be called, because her

rest had been broken; he left his affectionate love, and his wishes that his child would write often, and attend to Miss Boscawen's directions in her conduct. He had returned to Wetheral rather earlier than he intended, but business of importance called him away. This was Christobelle's first separation from her father. She learned afterwards Mr. Boscawen's perfect approbation of his scheme to spend some months in Scotland; and by so doing, putting it out of Clara's power to renew her engagement with Sir Foster, induced Sir John to hurry away to its fulfilment. It was his intention to leave Wetheral in the course of a fortnight with the whole establishment, and pass the summer at Fairlee. Christobelle was to be Mr. Boscawen's care till her father recalled her.

Isabel was delighted with that part of the plan which decided her sister a guest at Brierly for an indefinite period. The satisfaction of her mind gave her strength and spirits to delight in her little one, and to bear with unparalleled sweetness of temper the tiresome attentions and fears of Miss Boscawen. Nothing was quite right with the old lady which did not emanate from herself. The child was too upright, or it was too long in a horizontal posture. Its food was

acid, or too sweet; it was too tight in its clothes, or the poor little thing was hardly kept together in its covering. Isabel tied and untied, as the complaint dictated; but some new fault was ever arising to rouse the alarms of Miss Boscawen. One morning, Isabel amused herself by dressing her babe with her own hands, a pleasure she had not enjoyed since its birth. The nurse sat by her mistress's bed-side, watching and directing the operation, while Christobelle gazed delightedly at the little thing as it crowed and stretched its limbs. The sisters were most pleasingly occupied when Miss Boscawen entered. Her alarms were roused immediately.

"Oh! sister, how can you sit up there, dressing the child? Nurse, take away the infant, your mistress will be so fatigued! you must lie down again, sister."

"Sister," however, was for once resolved to persist; she could not relinquish the delightful amusement.

"Tabitha, I have not washed my child; I am only putting on his dear little clothes."

"Oh! sister, you are very wrong; you suffered by that cream which I begged you not to touch, and now I must insist upon your lying down; what will my brother say?"

"Mr. Boscawen will not object to seeing me dress my little boy," replied Isabel.

"Oh! sister, he will indeed. My brother is not aware how you fatigue yourself. Nurse, pray take the infant from your mistress."

Isabel became nervous, and the baby began to cry with all its might. Miss Boscawen was certain he was nearly strangled by tight strings.

"There, sister, you have hurt him; the tapes are tied too tightly, I dare say. How can you dress a babe, sister, when you never had one before? Nurse, take the poor infant."

A passion of tears weakened Isabel beyond all that the mere dressing of her babe could produce. Miss Boscawen became alarmed, and she ceased all further expostulation. Mr. Boscawen, who never remained long absent from his wife and child, at this moment entered the room. Isabel sobbed out:

"Mr. Boscawen!"

"Here I am, my love. What has discomposed you? I am afraid you are feverish." Mr. Boscawen seated himself in the nurse's chair, and felt Isabel's pulse; he looked very grave. "My dear Isabel, this pulse won't do. Nurse, what has caused this fever?"

"Tabitha won't let me dress my child, Mr.

Boscawen," sobbed Isabel, clasping her hands, and looking heart-broken.

"Give your mistress her child, nurse. My dear Isabel, you shall dress it whenever you please. Dress it now, my love, and let me see how maternally you can handle your infant." Mr. Boscawen took his boy from the nurse, and placed it in Isabel's arms. Delighted with the action, and feeling the kindness of her husband's manner, Isabel almost involuntarily kissed Mr. Boscawen's hand.

"Oh! brother, you are very wrong," exclaimed Miss Boscawen, looking anxiously at Isabel, whose delight was unbounded.

"A mother is performing a laudable and pleasing duty, Tabitha, when she nurses and fondles her child."

"Ah! but, brother, you are very wrong. Sister will be quite low and ill this evening. I foretold that cream business, brother."

What could Miss Boscawen do? Isabel continued to play with her child, and her brother authorised the deed; nay, he was watching his wife's movements with earnest and pleased attention. Her authority was of no avail, since her brother sanctioned such very improper exertions; she could only sigh, and resign herself to

her own duties — the worsted frame, and ordering dinner.

Miss Boscawen had a kind heart; her own dictations were prompted by good-will to others, and a desire to give pleasure, but then those pleasures must proceed from herself. She loved Isabel, and watched carefully over her health; but Isabel must not think for herself; every idea must originate from Miss Boscawen, otherwise it could not be wisely carried into effect; it could not even be wisely planned, if Miss Boscawen had not been a party in its formation. This was irritating and vexatious. Christobelle was under many obligations to Miss Boscawen, and loved her, when circumstances did not bring her into contact with Isabel. She very patiently undertook to teach her all kinds and varieties of work. She learned all the worsted stitches, and could assist her in sorting colours very ably. Miss Boscawen protested always against idleness in young people, and loved to see Christobelle employed in reading, or, practising under her tuition, the tasteful arts of tatting, embroidery, and fancy-work. Miss Boscawen and Christobelle were very good friends; and she often drew her attention from Isabel, and prevented

sundry visits to her sister's room, which would have terminated in mutual annoyance.

Christobelle had been a fortnight at Brierly, when a letter from Lady Wetheral threw her into consternation. It was a great honour to be noticed by her mother, but its contents were astounding.

"Dear Bell,

"You must make up your mind to return home, and be useful in spite of your stupidity, for I can't be left without a companion. Your father alarms me to death with his violence; and as to Clara, she has every excuse for the step she has taken. You know poor Clara and Sir Foster were very much attached, and it was tyranny to separate them. Nothing would serve your father but breaking off their engagement, so Clara ran away with Kerrison the day you quitted Wetheral. I declare I knew nothing about Clara's intention, for your sister always did as she pleased, without consulting me. However, she is Lady Kerrison now, and mistress of Ripley, which I always particularly wished might be her destiny.

"Your father has been ill, and confined some days to his room; but, I confess, *I* never was better, or more satisfied with the contemplation

of my daughters' excellent establishments. Of course, Clara has no settlement; but Kerrison is a poor, half-witted creature, and it will be her fault if she does not do as she pleases with him. The first Lady Kerrison gave way too much. The Kerrisons arrived at Ripley two days ago, and your father will not allow me to call upon them. I cannot think it right to bear malice; it would have been another thing if Clara had married a curate, or Lesley's son. I tell Sir John we ought to forgive as we hope to be forgiven ourselves; but he shakes his head like Lord Burleigh, and waves me away. Altogether, his temper is become extremely violent, and I must have you at home, for Thompson is going to marry the Hatton butler, and set up a public-house. I have no patience with servants marrying.

"I hope Isabel does not nurse; it will ruin her figure. Whereabouts is the nursery? I hope *miles* from her room. Tell her about the baize door; and as boys have loud voices, give the child lettuce lozenges, and make it sleep day and night. I hope Boscawen won't let her nurse it. When you return, perhaps you will persuade your father to forgive the Kerrisons, for I wish to give a succession of parties, and I

am sure I knew nothing about Clara's intentions. I think Frank Kerrison would be an excellent match for you, Bell, a few years hence. I shall send Thompson for you next week. Yours truly,

"G. WETHERAL."

Chrystobelle wept over Clara's flight; she wept over her dear father's illness, but still more over the summons to return and become her mother's companion. She gave her letter to Miss Boscawen in distress, for she could not trust her voice. Christobelle was too young then to understand her error in so doing. She was not aware the letter laid bare to Miss Boscawen's notice all her mother's private thoughts and intentions, and that its perusal must consign her to contempt and ridicule, in the opinion of brother and sister. She considered only her wretched fate in returning to Wetheral, as the avowed companion of a person who had never loved her, and who felt compelled to bear with "stupidity," because Thompson was on the eve of matrimony.

Miss Boscawen returned the letter without any comment: she advised Christobelle to conceal its intelligence from Isabel, and try to appear gay, lest the idea of losing her sister should

affect her spirits. It might be, Lady Wetheral's mind would change, or some event occur to postpone her return. She would inform her brother of the intimation from Wetheral; but in the mean time Christobelle was to drive all thoughts from her mind of leaving Brierly for some time to come.

With these consolations before her mental view, combined with the hopes and sprightliness of extreme youth, Christobelle soon forgot her sorrow, and enjoyed, in happy forgetfulness, the calm pleasures of Brierly. Thompson did not make her appearance, and the Boscawens never alluded to the transactions which had taken place at Wetheral. In a few days, therefore, all fears were hushed, and she resumed her usual occupations and amusements. Isabel made her appearance in the sitting-room in due time, to her sister's great satisfaction; but their mutual comfort was disturbed daily and hourly by the watchful affection of Miss Boscawen, who objected and demurred to every project and action on their parts, on the score of health. By this vexatious exaction of power on the sister's side, one material change was effected, which progressively gave happiness to Isabel, and gilded the gloomines er eye and heart. It drew her ion

towards her husband, who so often shielded her from Miss Boscawen's anxieties, particularly in her treatment of her son.

June opened so brightly in sunbeams and flowers, that Isabel and her sister loved to sit with the babe under the shade of a large mulberry-tree which stood upon the lawn. The air benefitted Isabel, and the soft rustling of the mulberry leaves lulled the infant into sound sleep. This pleasure was not suffered to pass without its alloy. Miss Boscawen was not the inventor of the agreeable *al fresco*, therefore it was wrong.

"Oh, sister, don't sit there! Miss Wetheral, my dear, come in. The flies will kill that poor child; nurse, bring it in. Sister, your complexion!"

"I don't mind my complexion, Tabitha, at all; and my child is very sleepy; it is just closing its eyes."

Miss Boscawen stood at the drawing-room window, with a parasol in her hand.

"Oh, but, sister, that is wrong: the child will be bitten all over with flies. Miss Wetheral, my dear, bring your sister in."

"Tabitha, here are no flies, I assure you. Don't insist upon my leaving this shady place!" exclaimed Isabel, beseechingly.

"Oh, sister, the heat! what will my brother say? Oh, brother, I am glad you are come, for sister is doing very foolishly."

"What is Isabel doing?" asked Mr. Boscawen, quickly.

"Sister is quite in a draught, brother; and the poor child must be all over insects and flies!"

Mr. Boscawen joined his lady. He stood for some moments contemplating Isabel, who sat in a low rustic chair, gently rocking the sleeping babe on her lap. She smiled as she met his eye.

"Mr. Boscawen, I know you are come to take my part. You won't insist upon my leaving this shady seat, will you?"

"No, my love, I am going to enjoy it with you." Mr. Boscawen seated himself on the turf, at Isabel's feet. Christobelle could not help thinking of the fairy tale which described Beauty and the Beast. It was exemplified in the forms before her. Isabel, so young and delicate, sat like a fairy, graceful in every movement, bending over her child, smiling, and delighting to be free from her sister-in-law's power. Boscawen, gaunt, tall, and unlovely, lay extended near her, smiling grimly. Miss Boscawen saw her alarms were unheeded.

"Oh, brother, you are wrong. Sister will be

very poorly, and you are on the damp grass yourself—oh, brother!"

It was a useless lamentation: the little party remained long and happily seated under the mulberry-tree; and Isabel, grateful for her husband's sanction, became less reserved in his presence. In time, she even sought his society, and the infant was ever a bond of union and affection between them. Christobelle did not think the gay, thoughtless Isabel would have become such a fond, anxious mother, so devoted to her child, so active as a nurse. And yet, why was she surprised? Had not Isabel warm affections, and was she not the favourite at Wetheral; always kind and conciliating, always gentle and beloved? Mr. Boscawen's age and manners chilled Isabel's heart by his anxiety to bestow attainments upon a mind which disliked application; but her child was sure to call forth every particle of her affectionate heart; its daily wants, its helplessness, made her useful in the way she best loved.

There was no more dull schooling for Isabel to pine over—no more lectures from Mr. Boscawen to urge her forward against her inclination, and perhaps against her capacity. Another object had entered upon the scene, to engross

arm each parent. Isabel never wearied
ching her babe; her dislike to work chair-
and footstools, under Miss Boscawen's
lance, was now succeeded by a taste for
lothes; and the quickness with which she
ed from the nurse the mystery of cutting
nd shaping materials, proved that an
alone was needed to call forth her
es.

Boscawen was content to see his lady
loyed; the schoolmaster gave way to the
; and he was no longer distressed by his
wife's thoughtless speeches. How could
talk unadvisedly, when her only subject
ed the nursery department? How could
rm her husband's nice perceptions in con-
on, when all her thoughts rested in one
ng interest—on one dear and mutual
of earthly pleasure?

stobelle was happiest of the happy at
. Mr. Boscawen had always something
l in his remarks which attracted her ad-
n; and if Isabel could not withdraw her
on from her new and delightful occupa-
Christobelle was ready to profit by her
d's extensive reading; to listen with
ss to his details; and enjoy his animat-

ing comments upon men and books. Miss Boscawen was aware that her brother's attention was given exclusively now to his wife and child, to the utter exclusion of her complaints and alarms; but her anxieties abated not. She still objected to every arrangement, and cavilled at all pleasures which her own brain had not devised; she could not even participate in them.

Isabel had long wished to spend a day in Bridgnorth. She knew no one in that part of the country; she could scarcely give a reason for wishing to visit that quiet rural spot; but she had been struck by its beautiful scenery, as she passed and repassed from Wetheral. She liked its situation, its river, its luxuriant banks; altogether, she had an extraordinary desire to spend a day at Bridgnorth, and take her child. It was a little change, it would be a pleasant long drive, and she was sure every body would like the little trip. Isabel mechanically watched her husband as she uttered her wish. He smiled. Isabel found a willing auditor, and her desire waxed stronger in word and deed.

"Well, now, dear Mr. Boscawen, you will take us; won't you? Chrystal and the child will have so many things to see. To be sure, the dear babe can't understand what he sees, but I

shall so like to carry him about the town, and hear people admiring his little beautiful face!"

Mr. Boscawen was overcome. This was the first time Isabel had ever addressed him as "dear Mr. Boscawen," and she was tossing her child at the moment with such grace, with such beaming affection! He threw his long arms round his wife and child, most ungracefully, but most fondly.—

"We will do as you wish, my love; we will go to Bridgnorth for a day—for a week, if you prefer it."

Isabel smiled in her husband's embrace, and looked truly happy. At that moment, perhaps, a change passed over the mind of each. Mr. Boscawen lost his alarmed and disgusted pupil in the matronly woman and companion, at least in *one* engrossing care. Isabel might feel that the task-master was exchanged for a kind and indulgent protector. Her child might engross her heart, but she would honour its father, and rejoice under his mild administration. Isabel's nature was grateful: she must love those who kindly sought her happiness; and Mr. Boscawen's attention to her wishes would surely secure her content of heart. Miss Boscawen appeared the only thorn in her path likely to

affect her peace; but the release from books and study was to Isabel's mind emancipation from all evils. The minor vexations of life were hardly felt by her yielding and gentle temper.

The Bridgnorth excursion was at once negatived by Miss Boscawen.

"Oh, sister, going to Bridgnorth! Mercy! who do we know in Bridgnorth, brother?"

"My wife wishes it, Tabitha."

"Oh mercy, brother, what a foolish wish! Eleven miles' drive, and a day spent in Bridgnorth!—what for, sister?"

"I always admired Bridgnorth, Tabitha, and I want to show my babe. I have set my heart upon displaying my babe."

"Oh, sister, mercy! I can't think a drive to Bridgnorth can do you any good. No, stay at home, sister."

"Mr. Boscawen has no objection, Tabitha. Have you, dear Mr. Boscawen?"

"Oh, but, brother, what nonsense! the child will be sick, and sister will be so tired! Don't go to Bridgnorth, sister: let us spend a day at Hawkstone next week."

"I have set my heart upon Bridgnorth," said Isabel, throwing an appealing glance to her husband.

Mr. Boscawen was resolved to please his wife. There was a link between them now, which nothing human could dissolve. Perhaps Mr. Boscawen silently felt pride in the idea of displaying his "beautiful babe," as Isabel termed it. At Brierly, beyond the establishment, there were none to gaze and admire. An elderly gentleman is generally proud of his first-born; the less he says, the more apparent it becomes in action. Mr. Boscawen watched his infant with unceasing interest, though he seldom made it the subject of his discourse. He was now going to enjoy the commendations of passing strangers in Bridgnorth. Isabel openly confessed her pride and expectations; they only lurked in her husband's eyes.

Miss Boscawen could not hear the subject named without expressing her dissent. She had not proposed the drive, or even imagined such an amusement, therefore the whole affair must be foolish and useless. Mr. Boscawen urged his sister to remain at Brierly—there was no occasion for her to undertake an irksome drive, if it was so unpalatable—she could prepare a late tea against their return. Miss Boscawen differed in opinion.

"Oh, mercy, no, brother! I

that sister does not fatigue herself. The poor child, you know—yes, sister, I will go with you, but, indeed, I think it a very foolish business—what with the heat, and the poor child, I am sure we shall all be very tired."

In spite of Miss Boscawen's murmurs and prognostics, Isabel looked forward with pleasure to the Bridgnorth visit, which was to take place in two days from the date of its first proposition. Isabel gloried in the idea of walking with her infant round the Castle Hill, and up all the streets; she was sure every body would exclaim at the size and beauty of her boy, and it would be a day of proud exultation to her. She was also gratefully eloquent upon her husband's kindness in entering at once into her plan; she was sure she must be the happiest creature in the world, if dear Mr. Boscawen never more required her to read, and plague herself over maps and things. She dearly loved nursing and singing to her babe, and dear Mr. Boscawen had told her that morning, he did not mind the child crying half the night; he was only happy to see what an excellent nurse and mother he had married. Was not that very good of dear Mr. Boscawen?

Christobelle also looked forward with pleasure to the trip; she had never been allowed to ac-

ethereal, and her mind resigned itself to most
sing anticipations of Bridgnorth gaiety. She
l conceive nothing more charming than roam-
with Isabel up and down the streets, and
aining the shop-windows — nothing more
me than standing upon the bridge, to watch
oal-barges from its parapet—nothing more
isite than the permission to buy gingerbread-
without remark and without ridicule. There
not two happier beings than Isabel and
stobelle, in their visions of the pleasures
h were to surround them at Bridgnorth.

CHAPTER XIV.

How could any party, however pleasantly arranged, prosper with Miss Boscawen as one of its members? Nothing could exceed her restlessness, and objection to every plan proposed. They were not setting forth to Hawkstone, therefore every thing was ill-devised — every preparation was nonsensical. Mr. Boscawen rode forward to order dinner, consequently Isabel must endure her sister-in-law's complaints with patient submission; and her comfort, during that lengthened drive, must arise from silently contemplating her child, and exchanging looks of vexation with Christobelle. They had not quitted the Brierly grounds, when Miss Boscawen commenced an enumeration of miseries which must fall to their lot from persisting in their excursion.

"Oh, sister, mercy! How you can wish to spend a whole day in such a place as Bridgnorth,

I cannot imagine. The poor child will be so uneasy, and you will be so heated; and Miss Wetheral, my dear, you had better not walk about, but sit quietly at the Crown with us all. I have brought my knitting, and a piece of carpet-work; and, mercy, sister!—what will you do with the child? and how can you be comfortable at the Crown with a baby?"

Christobelle ventured to think the baby would prove their greatest amusement, and Isabel's eyes and lips seconded the observation. Miss Boscawen smiled good-humouredly upon Christobelle, as upon a child whose opinions availed nothing, though the motive was amiable which produced them; but she addressed Mrs. Boscawen in reply.

"Oh! sister, this is such a sad business—every thing will be very uncomfortable, and that poor little baby will be heated into a fever."

Isabel replied gently to all the uncomfortable prophecies uttered by her sister-in-law; but their constant repetition destroyed the pleasure of the drive. It was vain to contend against Miss Boscawen's reasoning, for the result was a quietly-expressed pertinacity, which must end in the discomfiture of her gentle antagonist: it was equally impossible to resent an opposition which

took its rise in anxiety for the object whom she professed to love and watch over.

Miss Boscawen was not aware of her own failings; she could not detect herself, how deeply her desire to lead was interwoven with the affection she professed, and really felt, towards Isabel. That desire for power became the bane of her young sister's repose: had Miss Boscawen possessed that power, her kind heart would have ministered in every thing to Isabel's happiness; but, in striving for a poor and useless supremacy, both parties became victims to the struggle.

It was so on this day of pleasure: when they entered the town so long desired, so impatiently anticipated as the scene of matronly pride, Isabel was jaded and disquieted by the miseries of the journey, and Miss Boscawen became doubly impressed by her own complainings, that Bridgnorth would prove a miserable affair. When Mr. Boscawen came forward to assist them in alighting, he was surprised at Isabel's languid appearance, and alarmed at the languor of her voice. Isabel was overcome by her husband's anxious inquiry, his affectionate endearments, and alarms about herself and his child: he stood again before her as her protector from his sister's vexatious remarks, ready to soothe her grief, and

advocate her cause: his presence was a relief—it was a pleasure—she began to feel it was even necessary now to her happiness.

Isabel took Mr. Boscawen's arm when she left the carriage, and clung to it with an involuntary movement of delight: her husband perceived the expression of her eyes, as the warm pressure of her hand turned his looks towards her, and that expression agitated his feelings. He forgot Miss Boscawen, his long companion and housekeeper at Brierly—he forgot the sister who had borne with him the dull routine of twenty years in almost positive seclusion, to enjoy a new and delightful emotion in the certainty of having at last won his young wife's heart. That one absorbing pleasure, so novel, and so delicious, caused Mr. Boscawen to forget the existence of Miss Boscawen and Christobelle, who stood ready to receive his attentions upon Isabel's alighting. He had flown with Isabel up stairs, followed by the nurse and her young charge, and Miss Boscawen's transit took place under the superintendence of the waiter, but, on her part, in profound silence. It was evident a severe blow had been inflicted upon her heart or vanity, by this unexpected movement.

When they entered the apartment destined to

their use, Mr. Boscawen was still offering all his cares and attentions to Isabel. She was arranged most comfortably on the sofa with the assiduity of a lover. It was not Mr. Boscawen watching over the proprieties of an estranged pupil—it was a husband attending to the comfort of a beloved wife.

Christobelle rejoiced in the scene which gave to her view Isabel happy and unreserved in the presence of Mr. Boscawen. She rejoiced to think her sister was loving him as *she* had always loved him—that her studies must in future be as pleasing to her sister, as they had ever appeared to *herself*—that they should now enjoy the dressing-room together, as sincerely as she had formerly abhorred it. Christobelle's countenance betrayed the thoughts of her heart, for Isabel gave her a smiling glance as she gazed upon her; and the annoyances of the journey faded away in the contemplation of her happy, contented position, as she still held Mr. Boscawen's hand, while the babe lay sleeping in her lap.

Miss Boscawen made no remark, by word or look, upon the past and present: her head was thrown more back, and a look of injured innocence pervaded her form and movemen
not a syllable fell from her lips, as sl

in silent dignity to the table, and seated herself to her employments for the day. Neither Isabel nor Mr. Boscawen yet perceived their sister's wounded feelings: they were both watching their child, and enjoying their newly-awakened interest in each other, by disjointed chat on the part of Isabel, and in little, rather awkward, fond civilities on that of Mr. Boscawen. Isabel, too, had gained another step in intimacy and unreserve: she now addressed her husband as "dear Boscawen," which evidently gave intense satisfaction to its object.

"I shall walk round the Castle Hill with my baby when he wakes, dear Boscawen."

A pressure of the hand, and a look of pleased expression, gave Isabel courage, and raised her spirits to nearly their pristine height.

"I dare say you will go with us, dear Boscawen, won't you? and Chrystal will like to see the babe admired all over the town. You shall have plenty of gingerbread-nuts, dear Chrystal: the darling babe will be so admired. I know you will come with us, Boscawen, won't you now?"

Mr. Boscawen gave a grim smile of acquiescence, and accompanied the smile with a corresponding squeeze of the hand.

"I declare, Boscawen, you have hurt my poor little fingers," exclaimed Isabel, with an affected scream.

"Let me examine them," said her husband, trying to gain possession of her hand. Isabel withheld it playfully.

"Oh, no, Boscawen, I declare I gave it you in poor Wetheral chapel: don't you remember how amused I was, and how I laughed when you put on the ring?"

"Would you give it me again as willingly, if we were to renew our vows, Isabel?" asked Mr. Boscawen, with soft seriousness, as he caught her hand, and stroked it with his long unshapely fingers.

"Oh yes, indeed I should *now*, because you are so good, and I should not know what to do without you. You know you protect me from.... ...." Isabel's voice sunk into a whisper, which reached her husband's ear alone; but her eyes were directed towards Miss Boscawen, who appeared intently occupied with her worsted work. Mr. Boscawen smiled and patted her hand, as if in correction. Isabel went laughingly on.

"I always like people who love me, but I don't know how it is, some persons are not pleasant, though they are kind. Mamma was very

kind sometimes, but still, however, I love you, dear Boscawen, very much. I suppose I always liked you, but you frightened me so."

"Frightened you, my love!"

"Oh, yes, you did very much after I was married; you looked so proud and frowning, and then those nasty books! I don't think I quite loved you till you took my part about the cream, and then I *did* begin in earnest: I thought it so good of you; but when you allowed me to dress my child, oh, then how could I help loving you!" Isabel, under the influence of her feelings, threw her arms round Mr. Boscawen's neck, and burst into tears. The action woke her infant. "There, now, Boscawen dear, we have woke the little darling; how could you let me talk in that way, and do such things! I don't know what was the matter with me."

Isabel, in smiles and tears, began the preparation for her child's comforts. The nurse was summoned, and it was fed before her, as she gazed delightedly at its movements: the face and figure of Isabel received its greatest charm from her maternal solicitude. Her enthusiastic nature was interestingly and beautifully illustrated in the devotion of her heart [illegible] most loved object, and the *ins*

Wetheral was buried in the deep love of her offspring. Christobelle never remembered her so captivating as she appeared at this moment, when her attention was engrossed in watching her child. The tears of grateful remembrance were upon her cheek, yet smiles were chasing every emotion from her heart, but those of tenderness and a mother's pride. Mr. Boscawen looked on, enchanted. Isabel, in the fullness of her heart, turned for the first time since her arrival to Miss Boscawen.

"Ah, Tabitha, I am sure you will be one of our party round the Castle Hill, to enjoy my babe's crowing delight. Do put away your work, and join us."

Miss Boscawen did not look up from her work, as she drily replied, "No, thank you, sister."

Mr. Boscawen thought a little promenade would be very pleasant after a long drive, and he joined in his lady's wish that she would attend them.

"No, thank you, brother." Miss Boscawen fixed her eyes pertinaciously upon her work: she sat like a wax figure, motionless, and apparently sightless.

"I am afraid you are ill, Tabitha," observed

Isabel. "Do let me order you a glass of wine and a biscuit. A glass of wine, dear Boscawen, would not that do Tabitha good?"

"No, thank you, sister."

"A biscuit, Tabitha."

"No, thank you, brother."

Miss Boscawen's answers to many affectionate inquiries were equally laconic. Something was wrong, but the cause was equally unintelligible to her brother and sister. The walk, however, was to take place, and, if Miss Boscawen would not be prevailed upon to add to the little party, she would, probably, be kind enough to put off dinner another hour. This change in the dinner arrangement was met with perfect assent by Miss Boscawen.

"Certainly, brother."

Mr. Boscawen looked earnestly at his sister; but there was no ripple on the surface of the water, to detect its agitation: the voice was dry in its tones, but the eye was placid, and the manner quiet and composed; one strong symptom betrayed the disease within to her brother, and upon that symptom he spoke.

"Tabitha, you are vexed about something — tell me what it is."

"I am not vexed, brother."

Mr. Boscawen smiled. "I am sure all is not right, Tabitha; you have made no objection to a single plan proposed, since we entered this room, therefore, you are not pleased with some one of us."

"I am not displeased with you, brother."

"Then my wife has unfortunately offended you."

Isabel flew to Miss Boscawen. "I have not offended you, dear Tabitha, have I? No one is ever offended with *me* long, for I am so sorry to give offence. A thousand pardons, dear Tabitha, if I have unintentionally hurt you, but what could it be?"

"No, sister, you have not offended."

Isabel was free from offence, therefore her thoughts could dwell upon her child; she did not suspect or observe Miss Boscawen's manner.

"Oh, well, then, let us set off, for I am dying to hear my child admired. Now, Chrystal, you are head-nurse, so attend my babe in front, and I will follow with dear Boscawen, to hear and see every body's admiration. Now, Mr. Boscawen, don't let us linger."

Isabel took her husband's hand, and he suffered her to drag him in her lively playful way to the door. Isabel was becoming the happy

Isabel of former days rapidly. Her sprightly laugh, at that moment, sounded like the joyous tones which had captivated her husband upon their first acquaintance; she was aware of it herself.

"I declare I am laughing as heartily as I used to do, when we were engaged, dear Boscawen, and you look so like yourself when I first saw you, and when you thought all I did was right."

"I think so *now*, Isabel," said Mr. Boscawen, drawing her to him, and looking tenderly in her face.

Mr. Boscawen's person and cast of features could never assume a sentimental expression, but Isabel was equally unsentimental herself. If her husband looked kindly, and behaved indulgently, she was happy; and, while her child continued well, eating his meals heartily, and stretching out his little arms at her approach, no sorrow could reach the heart of its devoted mother. Isabel would forget all grief at the cradle of her darling babe, in whatever form it might assail her.

They were sallying forth from the Crown, when a post-chaise drove rapidly through the north gate, and came with speed towards the inn. For a moment they stood still to watch

its progress. The horses were panting wi
tigue, but they were quickly unharnesse
a well-known voice called out with en
"Horses instantly to Brierly." It was Thom

Christobelle's fears instantly told her sh
to receive a summons from Wetheral, bu
had spent three happy months with Isabe
could not in justice complain of its hurrie
unexpected arrival. The last letters, hov
from Sir John, had not alluded to any su
tention. Mr. Boscawen had a powerful p
timent that something was wrong at Wet
and they hurried to the side of the c
Christobelle caught Thompson's eye.

"Oh, for ever, and two days! Why,
Miss Chrystal, as I'm alive! Well, Miss Chr
you must please to return with me immed
to Wetheral."

Isabel looked bewildered; Mr. Boscaw
quired after the health of Sir John with
anxiety. He was quite well; but Lady
theral was suffering, and required her daug
immediate presence; she was not to del
hour. Thompson produced a note writt
Lady Wetheral, which was to be put into
tobelle's hand the instant Thompson arrive

"Dear Bell,

"The moment you receive this set out, without waiting to pack up your things, for I can't be left a moment. I am very ill, and require one person's whole attention. You have led an idle life for twelve years, mousing in your father's study, therefore, your time is come to be a little active. I miss your sisters dreadfully. I am glad Isabel is happy, and I wish I was so, too; but your father is getting extremely methodistical, which distracts me. Don't keep Thompson a moment; you will be here this evening.

"G. WETHERAL."

Poor Isabel's day of happiness was changed into mourning, as she stood reading the note over her sister's shoulder. The hope of her heart fell at this announcement into sorrow and disappointment, and they returned into the sitting-room, stunned by the unwelcome summons. Isabel could only lament, and resolve to return home; she threw her arms round Christobelle.

"My dear Chrystal, we have been so happy together! What will my babe do without you; and what will you do without the babe!"

Christobelle sat weeping, but could not reply to Isabel's touching appeals.

"Ah, Chrystal, and what will you do for dear

Boscawen's lectures and readings, and when shall we be together again? how you will lament my darling babe! but, Chrystal, don't cry. I know it must be a dreadful blow to leave that darling boy, but I will have his picture taken every month, and send you the old one regularly. I know Boscawen will let me have its picture fresh every month, for he will wish it himself, and you will be so delighted to see its innocent face every month, too. Tell papa I *must* have you every year, and tell Clara that she will be very happy with Sir Foster, when a child is born. Perhaps she won't like being at her studies, any more than I did, but Sir Foster won't plague her after her child is born; be sure and tell her *that*, Chrystal."

Miss Boscawen forgot her injuries for the moment, to comfort Christobelle, when the cause of their grief was explained. Her soothings were more useful and bracing to the spirit. She told her that duties were imperious at home; and she assured her that conscience through life would be tranquil under all trials, by the knowledge that we had been obedient and pleasing to our parents, and, by so doing, acceptable before our Maker, whose commandment it was to "honour thy father and thy mother."

"Oh, yes, Tabitha," cried Isabel, earnestly; "Chrystal does not mean to sorrow for being recalled on that account. She feels the loss of the dear child, and I can understand the agony of parting with such a treasure." Isabel took her boy from the nurse's arms, and pressed it to her bosom. "I can tell what *you* feel, Chrystal, for, if any one took my child from me, I should die on the spot." The very idea of a separation caused Isabel's cheeks to turn deadly pale.

Mr. Boscawen appeared, and advised Christobelle to return with Thompson from Bridgnorth, without giving a thought to her clothes; they should be sent after her. He considered Lady Wetheral's wish peremptory; and, as her anxiety to have her daughter with her was one of Thompson's particular remarks to him, he had ordered horses to be brought out for the Ironbridge; the chaise was at that moment ready, and Thompson only waited for her young lady's presence to return to Wetheral.

The adieus were short. Christobelle was again embraced by Isabel, and received a kind farewell from Miss Boscawen, but she was hurried away by Boscawen, without embracing her little nephew; he feared lest Isabel should suffer by a prolonged view of her regrets. When de-

posited in the chaise, she saw Isabel nodding and weeping, and waving her hand from the window; her child was placed, too, where Christobelle could see him kicking his little feet, ignorant of his poor aunt's sorrow. Mr. Boscawen said many kind things, which were remembered the following day; but Christobelle could not heed them at the time they were uttered; her eyes and heart were at the window with Isabel. She thought her misery could never be exceeded by any of those trials of after-life, which Miss Boscawen alluded to: her heart was broken — her happiness for ever gone. The chaise moved on, and Thompson *tête-à-tête*d with her to Wetheral.

The silence was unbroken till the woods of Wetheral roused them into conversation. Thompson would not interfere with her young lady's grief, but allowed her to exhaust its violence in the natural way. Christobelle cried without intermission, till they arrived within a few miles of the castle; and Thompson, probably, was content to remain silent, in pleasing contemplations of her own approaching matrimony. At last she spoke.

"Now, my dear Miss Chrystal, cheer up, and think of all you will have to do. Your mamma will not like a sorrowful face, and she is become

very capricious and rough, since Miss Clara married."

"Is mamma angry with Clara?" Christobelle asked, mournfully.

"Oh! for ever, and two days!—angry? not she indeed! but my mistress wants to visit at Ripley—and my master, he won't allow it. She pines very much about it, and gets melancholy; so, as I am engaged to Mr. Daniel, at Hatton, you are to take my place — and a terrible place it will be; for my lady has never spoken to me kindly since I engaged myself to Mr. Daniel, Miss Chrystal."

Christobelle's tears increased at this melancholy picture of her future destiny. Poor Thompson, who always loved her, strove to impart comfort.

"Pray, don't cry so terribly, dear Miss Chrystal, for your papa is always kind and pleasant, and you are such a favourite, you know. My lady, she does give way to whims, as I can testify; but my master, he never was any thing but polite and proper. Mr. Daniel tells me that whims run always in the female line; but he only says that, Miss Chrystal, to plague me."

Christobelle inquired if her father had heard from Anna Maria, or if her sister Julia was still

at Bedinfield. Thompson put her finger to lip with a mysterious air.

"Miss Chrystal, there is something going there which I can't make out, neither can Daniel. My lady, she wrote to invite herself Bedinfield for change of air, after Miss Cla marriage, and a letter came in reply from dowager, which I never made out clearly; my master, he had a long interview with lady, and nothing was said about it. My l wept a good deal, but she never spoke to upon the subject, which I do not take kin for I have always been consulted upon fan matters; and Heaven knows, Miss Chrys how I held forth upon poor Miss Clara's sw temper, when you know her best mood wo turn milk into vinegar!"

"And Anna Maria?"

"Oh! for ever, Miss Chrystal, what a pl that Paris is! Mrs. Pynsent, our young l that was, writes word they are coming ho for they have not eaten an intelligible thing si they quitted Wetheral. Poor young Mr. P sent declares a vixen fox roasted and well p pered, would be far better than the ragouts frogs he has been obliged to eat since he old England. Mr. Daniel says, the Ha

people have sent them an invitation to return there for a time. Mrs. Pynsent, the old lady, has been very low and poorly since her son married, and she spends almost every other day with Mrs. Hancock."

They turned, at this moment, from the high-road into the Wetheral grounds, and Christobelle was obliged to compose her features and heart into something like external tranquillity. She made fearful efforts to banish Isabel and Brierly from her thoughts; she could not think upon the child whom she loved so dearly. She tried to remember alone her father's precepts, and act upon his often repeated cautions, to begin early in life the important task of sacrificing pleasure to duty, and to pray for strength to act uprightly and obediently to his laws. She did pray at this moment; and her earnest repetition of the prayer which he taught her to offer up daily to her parent in heaven, caused some words to escape which reached Thompson's ear. She turned towards her with quickness.

"Well, for ever and two days, Miss Chrystal, if you are not saying your prayers! Don't let my lady hear you going on so, or she will be angry; she called me a methodist the other day with her own lips, because I said just a few

words about Mr. Daniel being a church-going man: and so he is, Miss Chrystal, I assure you."

Christobelle's heart leaped when she saw her father standing upon the lawn, as they drove up the avenue. The happy hours, the quiet delights of his study, his affection for her, his long, solitary readings, while she was absent — all and each pressed upon her mind, and absorbed all thoughts of Brierly. There he stood watching their approach, and smiling upon his child the same benignant smile which ever welcomed her presence into his study: she held out her arms, though she could not reach him; but the chaise stopped, and she was soon in the parental embrace. How was she caressed and welcomed after an absence of three months!

Christobelle thought there was a change in her father; but she was too young to discover or dwell upon the cause. She fancied his manner more grave, and his voice was melancholy; but her attention was attracted to a thousand trifles, and she forgot to gaze upon him. She was listening to all that had occurred in her absence. Christobelle took tea with her father alone, and to him she detailed the happiness she had enjoyed at Brierly; the odd ways of Miss

Boscawen, the perfect bliss of Isabel: a smile lighted up his countenance.

"I married Isabel to a good man, and she was certain of happiness: her child is a delightful gift, but her content proceeds from her husband's temper and principles. Isabel is a warm-hearted girl; she must be happy with Boscawen." Christobelle assured him her thoughts were wrapped up in her babe, much more than in Boscawen. Isabel only lived for her child.

"She may think so," replied Sir John, "and you may judge it is so; but when you have lived a little longer, you will both perceive a woman's happiness to depend upon her husband's principles. If he is worthless, she must be miserable; and children increase the misery, if she loves them. Boscawen is a good man, and Isabel is happy. Be careful in *your* choice, Crystal."

"Oh! papa, you shall choose for me."

"Very well, my love; if I live, I will be your counsellor; but if your father is taken from you, beware of marrying for any motive of worldly considerations. Marry with esteem; and, if you believe a man to be religious, performing his duties as a son and brother with kindliness and affection, then love him, for he will deserve

your affection. Beware of marrying for affluence alone; your fate will be then as Julia's or Clara's fate."

Sir John Wetheral's voice sunk into low, pathetic tones as he concluded, and Christobelle was silent from an awful feeling which stole over her frame, and forbade remark. A tap at the door roused them from the silence of many minutes; it was Thompson with a message from Lady Wetheral, requesting her daughter's presence. Christobelle looked at her father with alarm; her hour was arrived, when the things of this world must no longer appear like a vision of beauty; her life, in future, would be a lengthened chain of annoyances, and she must bend to the destiny which awaited her. She followed Thompson to her mother's apartments, where she had secluded herself since Lady Kerrison's marriage, in terror; but Sir John had smiled upon the movement, and Christobelle could not escape her lot. She was certain of an unpleasant reception, but restrained her tears from flowing. Lady Wetheral was seated near her work-table, upon which six wax-lights stood burning. She looked up.

"Oh! you are come, Bell: there, sit down,

for I can't bear any one to come near me, heating the atmosphere. I think you are grown tall and gawky with your visit; it's very odd you should be so much plainer than your sisters. I suppose Isabel is very busy with her boy, poor thing! I hope all her children will be boys; girls are great plagues. Your father will not allow me to see poor dear Clara, and there is no settlement made upon her, which worries me to death. Suppose Sir Foster dies, and Clara should become a widow without any provision; I can't be troubled with any of you again. I can't be annoyed with daughters returning upon me, when I have taken such pains to establish them. I am extremely worried about Clara, and my spirits are sinking fast; not a soul to take care of me. Thompson on the eve of marrying! — nonsensical stuff! Servants, of all people, marrying! Daniel can't settle fifty pounds upon Thompson, and so I tell her, simpleton!"

Christobelle had nothing to offer in the way of consolation; she was always under a spell before her mother. Her tone of voice, too, was irritable, and the fear of offending closed her daughter's lips from answering. Lady Wetheral proceeded.

"You are awkward a

don't wriggle in your chair, and look so intolerably stupid. I thought Boscawen would have talked or read you into something like ease of manner. I shall be tired to death with your abrupt motions revolving round me. I must make you useful in your influence over your father, Bell; and you must contrive to gain his consent to our visiting at Ripley. Your poor father is become very selfish in many things. I meant to pay a visit of a few weeks to Bedinfield, but the dowager has sent me a letter I can't understand. Your father says the purport of it is to decline my company, but I could see no purport at all. The Pynsents are in France, and I never liked Boscawen; therefore I ought not to be refused my poor Clara's society. This is dreadful seclusion, and I have this little illumination to drive away blue devils. I never see Sir John now; my influence is quite gone."

It was necessary Christobelle should now endeavour to enter into conversation, and assist, as far as lay in her power, to console and amuse the disquietudes of her mother's mind. She, therefore, inquired if it was a true report concerning Anna Maria's return to England.

"Yes, Anna Maria is on the point of returning from Paris, very much against my wishes; she

will be only a secondary person at Hatton, and their complaints are very foolish about that fine city. I think every thing has gone wrong since my daughters married; I have not been well or happy since Clara left me, and never shall be again."

"I hope you will, mamma; I will do all I can to please you."

"What can you do?" replied her mother, quickly, and with considerable irritation in her tone; "you are too young to establish, or to think about it these three years; how can *you* please me? I am declined at Bedinfield by the dowager, who, I am sure, manages her son and his wife, for neither of them added a line to regret my postponement, if it *was* one; but I could not understand it. My daughter Pynsent cannot ask me to Hatton when she returns; she will be a guest herself. I must not see Clara; and if I did, she has no settlement. What pleasure has accrued to me from their splendid matches?"

None, certainly, as far as Christobelle could judge from her mother's complaints, but surely Brierly was a home of happiness; she told her so.

"Brierly may suit *you*, Bell, but what amusement would it be to me? Isabel spoiling her figure and disordering her dress, by carrying a

heavy child about all day; Miss Boscawen sitting upright like all the generation of old maids; and Boscawen keeping only a pair of horses, and never entertaining the neighbourhood! I should be shocked and distressed all day."

"They were so happy, mamma!"

"I dare say, Bell: so are the pigs when they have clean straw and plenty to eat. I can't fancy any thing but merely animal enjoyments at Brierly."

Who could reply to such determined obliquity of reasoning? Christobelle perceived, indeed, that four splendid matches had failed to produce pleasure to her mother's mind. Each establishment appeared clogged with an evil, which overbalanced their boasted worth and magnificence. Deeply as she coveted, and had laboured for her daughters' wealthy suitors, the affluence of their position could now give no satisfaction. The excitement was over, the objects were attained; and the disadvantages connected with each were now as fluently expatiated upon as were once their glory and their triumph. All this language of complaint, this unexpected and unfounded source of grievance, pained and dispirited Christobelle. It was ceaseless in its flow, and hurtful in its consequences, to herself.

Lady Wetheral's nature and temper was changed in her daughter's eyes: that agreeable fascination of manner, which so often softened away an abrupt expression, was departed; the playful tone of voice and action, which had so long held powerful influence over her husband's mind, was no more. Her ladyship became secluded and irritable, pining over Clara's banishment, regretting the absence of her settlement, and offended at her own banishment from Bedinfield, till it became painful to approach her; and Christobelle's spirits sunk under the confinement and terror of her presence. She became ill; and her father's anxiety sought a remedy for the evils she endured, by issuing a pardon to the errors of Lady Kerrison, and admitting the families to a renewal of its ancient association. This proved the signal for domestic peace.

Lady Wetheral, eager to profit from the permission so tardily bestowed, flew immediately to Ripley: the carriage was at the door in a quarter of an hour after peace had been declared; and she quitted her solitary apartments, in the highest apparent health and spirits. During her absence, Thompson appeared before Christobelle,

and begged she would apologize to her lady for a step she felt called upon to take during her lady's absence, for many reasons. Christobelle inquired with surprise to what she alluded.

"Oh, for ever, Miss Chrystal! I think the fashion of runaway matches is coming into vogue at Wetheral. I have had many conversations with my lady; but, really, they have been of so unpleasant a nature, that I must beg to take French leave, as Miss Clara did. Assure her ladyship, if you please, Miss Chrystal, of my sorrow at being obliged to part in this cursory sort of way; but, as I am engaged to marry Mr. Daniel to-morrow morning, it is useless to argue the affair any longer. I hope, Miss Chrystal, you will do me the honour to call upon me, and take tea, some fine Sunday, with us. We shall always be sensible of the attention."

Christobelle stared at Thompson's disclosure; but she was dressed for departure, and appeared anxious to be gone. Christobelle said her mother would miss her services, and who was to succeed her in performing those which Lady Wetheral required? Thompson smiled.

"My dear Miss Chrystal, my lady will not be very much surprised, for I have threatened some time to leave suddenly. I have been baited like

a bull, these two months, about Mr. Daniel; and yet, miss, the church enjoins matrimony to servants as well as other people. Mr. Daniel quotes St. Paul, to prove the thing. However, I decline any more controversy; for, my lady, she loses her temper now: therefore, I shall be much obliged by your informing her of this step."

Christobelle gave the required assurance, that she would herself name the affair to her mother; and Thompson, after making her adieus, and repeating the pleasure she should feel in receiving Miss Chrystal to tea, quitted Wetheral and its eventful scenes, to seek a new home, and become the property of Daniel Higgins.

Christobelle was reading with her father a scene in Macbeth, when Lady Wetheral entered. She had returned from Ripley; and the extreme paleness of her countenance, her trembling hands, and quivering lip, announced some fearful accident or event. She laid her hand upon her husband's shoulder, and looked in his face, but did not utter a word. Sir John grasped her hands, and bade her be composed; but his lady's distress prevented all utterance for some moments: at length, a deep sob relieved her, and she spoke in hurried accents—

"John—the brute has beaten her!"

Sir John feared his lady's intellects were shaken by some horrible accident: he again took both her hands, and seated her, beseeching her to gain calmness, and explain the cause of her agitation. Lady Wetheral placed her hand upon her heart, and wept for some time in silence. It was distressing to look upon her, suffering, without possessing a knowledge of its cause, or being able to soothe its violence. A pause ensued, till the paroxysm of weeping relieved her heart, and enabled her to account for the extraordinary emotion. She took her husband's hand, and spoke in broken sentences.

"John, I did not believe Sir Foster's temper was so bad as people represented — I did not think he would use Clara ill; or, indeed, John, she should never have entered Ripley, to be treated like his spaniel — oh, John!"

"Tell me, at once, Gertrude, what you mean," said her husband, calmly.

"I went to Ripley, John, to give my daughter the delightful information of your having overlooked her little fault; and I entered the sitting-room, where Clara and Sir Foster were quarrelling, oh, so dreadfully! — I was exceedingly shocked — I did not think a daughter of

mine would ever quarrel as Clara did, with her husband—it was so underbred—so very vulgar! Sir Foster swore he would kick Clara, if she persevered in her assertion — it was all about a wretched fishmonger.— Clara persisted, and my child was knocked down before my eyes—I saw my beautiful Clara upon the ground; her features swollen, and her dear face crimson. Oh, John, I never saw such a scene!"

Lady Wetheral again wept, and proceeded brokenly to describe her feelings and continue her account.

"I never felt so distressed and shocked in my life! I had always inculcated the propriety of commanding their temper into my daughters' minds. I always laid great stress upon the bad taste of making scenes for servants to report and comment upon. I am sure I lectured my girls by the hour, on the necessity of keeping up appearances, and avoiding scenes—public scenes—which the neighbourhood must ridicule. I cannot bear that Clara should become an object of ridicule. What will Mrs. Pynsent say? Nothing can equal my shocked feelings. I told Sir Foster, he was a brute, too disgusting and monstrous for remark or notice from *me;* and I assured Clara, her violence of temper had done little

credit to my instructions, and ruined her ap
pearance most cruelly. My observations wer
of no avail; Clara persisted in asserting th
odious fishmonger was right in his charges, a
she raised herself from the ground, and anothe
blow was struck. Oh, John, I left my chil
bleeding on the ground—neither of them listene
to me, or replied to me. What can be done t
hush up this dreadful scene, for my cries brough
in three footmen? Oh, John, what is to b
done?"

Her ladyship's tears again flowed copiously.

"I will go, instantly, to Ripley," said Sir Joh
seriously, but calmly. "Chrystal, my love, b
ready to accompany me in ten minutes."

"I shall want Bell to talk to, my love—don
take that great girl with you, every where."

"I particularly wish to point out to my daug
ter's notice the misery and crime of connecti
herself with a man whose only virtue is the po
session of riches, Gertrude. Make haste, Chry
tal; the carriage will be round in ten minutes."

Christobelle flew to her room, and prepared t
accompany her father. When she returned t
the study, it was empty. Lady Wetheral ha
returned to her apartments, and Thompson wa
no longer there to receive and assist her. Chri

tobelle was on the point of ascending the stairs, to make known her flight, but the carriage was already at the door, and her father called for her. She entered the carriage as her mother's bell rang furiously, but time was too precious for delay; the order was given, and they proceeded towards Ripley with rapidity.

CHAPTER XV.

Sir John Wetheral spoke very seriously to his daughter during their rapid transit: he pointed out the crime of sacrificing principle and content upon earth, to bow to idols which tempted the worst passions of human nature, and gave the soul to mammon. He laid before her notice the fate of those who forgot their Maker's injunction, to care for their soul, and not for the body; and who strove for earthly things, without considering they could not carry them to that place, where the innocent and upright spirit alone could be triumphant.

Christobelle listened to her father's mild admonitions in silent, pleased attention, and her heart drank in the holiness of the subject, and the justice of his remarks; but when he changed his tone and subject, to charge himself with negligence, in allowing his lady's influence to prevail

over his better reason—when he took blame to himself for allowing the marriage of Julia, so contrary to his own wishes, to a man so little calculated to make her happy, and prophecied, in melancholy accents, that his grey hair would be brought in sorrow to the grave, by his own unpardonable indolence, and blind affection—*then* she wept to hear him, and pressed his hands to her heart.

"Do not say so, papa — do not die, or what will become of me?"

He smiled at her energy.

"I am not going before my appointed time," he said, putting one arm round her waist. "I shall not leave *you*, Chrystal, unprotected, whenever that time may arrive, for your mind is stored with those precepts which can mitigate the evils of this world. You have a parent, my child, who is not a fallible father, such as I am, and to Him I commit you, and did commit you from your birth. You were given up exclusively to me, with your poor mother's consent—indeed, by her expressed wish—and I have endeavoured to lead your mind to those truths which must advance your happiness. I have led you, Chrystal, to the fountain of living waters, and from that fountain you will drink the cup of tribulation, but it

will be sweetened by the knowledge that it came from His hands — that all trials are sent to the good, to see if their faith is sincere, and their patience an abiding trust in Him who gives and takes away. If, Chrystal, your earthly father is taken away, and your home broken up, remember that Father above, and remember that house made without hands, promised to all who walk steadily and faithfully to the end."

Christobelle's heart was wrung with the seriousness of her father's words, and the peculiar tone in which they were uttered : it seemed that he was preparing to leave for ever the home, and the study, which had sheltered her youth from every storm, and had been the scene of their daily and long communion together. If her father was no more, who besides Isabel would cherish his companion, and love her as he had done ? Who would save her from her mother's irony, and soothe her increasing irritability towards her ? Christobelle became wild with the idea of his early death, and, clasping her hands, cried, "Oh ! dearest papa, don't talk so—don't frighten me, and promise not to leave me."

"Nay, Chrystal," he replied, soothingly, "do not alarm yourself ; I am here in present health ; and I trust, for some years to come, to be allowed

to watch over you. I *speak* seriously, because my words will be remembered by you hereafter, when I may not be near to give counsel; and I *think* seriously, because Clara's unhappy marriage may affect her conduct and character: she is too young to escape the contamination of passing her life with Sir Foster Kerrison."

Sir John became agitated as they turned into Ripley Park, and drew near the house which held his unfortunate daughter: he wished to gain firmness with gentleness for the approaching interview, and he muttered several times, quickly, "I hope I shall not forget myself!—God help me, I hope I shall not forget myself!" He was agitated even to nervousness, when they drove past the conservatory, and the bells pealed their arrival; but Christobelle was then too young and inexperienced to be useful, or even to understand the depth of a parent's agony. She followed him in silence to the hall and into the sitting-room, where Clara lay extended upon a chaise-longue, with a bandage round one arm, and a severe bruise upon her eye. She rose, upon their entrance, with self-possession, and, apparently, with utter oblivion regarding the past, for her eyes flashed with angry feelings, and she spoke

only of the present moment, and of her own distress.

"You are come to witness a pretty scene at Ripley, papa, and to congratulate Sir Foster, of course, upon being the greatest brute in Shropshire. Pray see if 'brute' is not legibly stamped upon my arm, and written upon my left eye. Look at this, papa."

Clara drew the bandage from her arm, and a dreadful sight presented itself: her anger rose as she gazed upon it.

"If my absence should give *one* qualm to that brute, I would never see his face again; but I will plague his heart out!"

Her father was greatly shocked: he was offended and disturbed by the exhibition of Clara's temper, but he detested the cowardly violence of a man who could strike a helpless wife, even through extent of provocation: his first movement was to insist upon her return home. "Return with me to Wetheral, Clara, instantly; I will not see you treated like a slave, or bear that my daughter should be struck down like a dog, by a coward! Clara, return to your home, and I will tell Sir Foster he shall reach you again through my heart."

Clara shook her head. "Papa, I detest Sir

Foster; and I would willingly fly to the wilds of America, if that distance would free me from his brutal presence—but my mother would speak bitterly to me. She drove me to Ripley by everlasting persuasions, and I will not bear her taunts at my return. My mother has done this by her love of high establishments, and I am married! She told me this morning, anger ruined my appearance; but *she* has ruined my happiness. Nevertheless, I'll plague his torpid heart, and torment him by day and by night! He shall feel that I can strike, too, in another way!"

"Clara," cried her father, "let me not hear such dreadful threatenings from a young woman's lips...."

"I will threaten!" interrupted Lady Kerrison, starting to her feet; "and I will do it! Am I to be bearded on every side, without revenge? I am passionate by nature, but I am raging with ill-usage, and I'll torment him—yes, I will retort upon him faithfully!"

Such language from a youthful and beautiful creature seemed to stun her father; and Christobelle stood petrified at such a display of female intemperance. Could this be Clara, her own sister? Was this irritable creature the sister of

Isabel, of Julia, of Anna Maria? As she stood baring her arm, and fixing her eyes upon her father, she looked a Pythoness unveiling future woes and tribulations to the enemies of her country.

Clara was yet standing, when Sir Foster walked into the room, tapping his boot, and humming his usual air: the same smile was upon his lips, and the same vacant expression was upon his features: he nodded familiarly to his guests, as though their parting was but of yesterday, and he sat down in his capacious-cushioned arm-chair as quietly, and with the same enjoyment, as formerly. His eye glanced at Clara, and a chuckling sound proceeded from his throat — the same note of internal gratification which issued in the boudoir, when Lucy Kerrison detailed his prowess with the fishmonger. Clara understood its meaning, and she pointed towards him with a bitter contempt.

"There he sits, smiling and curling his audacious lip, as if he was thinking of any thing but cowardice and cruelty! Would you imagine that man could strike a woman to the ground for upholding justice and right?"

Sir Foster winked his eye with the rapidity which denoted observation; his colour rose at

Clara's remark, but he did not reply. Why did Clara persevere?

"Would you think *that* animal, called a man, ever rose from his dulness to revenge himself upon my person, for affronts he dared not revenge upon a fishmonger?"

Sir Foster was roused: he approached Clara, and held her arm. "Will you hold your tongue, or I'll kick you to the devil!"

"No, I will not hold my tongue: I tell you the man was right—right—right—he was right —if I die saying it! Now, will you dare touch me before my father, coward?"

"Oh, Clara!" Christobelle exclaimed, "do not persist in using provoking words—oh, be like Isabel!"

"I'll be Clara Wetheral," she replied, indignantly; "I will never submit to tyranny, or crouch to brutality. I would spurn a quarrel about a salmon! Beat a woman about a salmon! —is there a coward upon earth who would dare have acted as this man has done?"

Sir Foster appeared irritated to the top of his bent, and his hand was raised to strike. Sir John Wetheral could be silent no longer; he called to his son-in-law, in piercing tones, "Kerrison, be a man!" Sir Foster did not touch

Clara — he turned away with a great effort, and resumed his seat; but he closed his fist, and shook it at his wife.

"If I don't wallop you some day properly!"

"Ay, when the fishmonger returns," answered Clara, in taunting tones.

The father's distress at witnessing this scene cannot be described. A parent may feel with him the desolation of heart he endured, as he listened to his daughter's unadvised and unwomanly railing, and comprehend his deeply-pained, disgusted feelings—but no pen can depict it. He stood for some moments unable to master his emotion; and, to all appearance, he was bowed down under its influence. Christobelle was sure the effect of this scene would have a fearful result, and that his mind would dwell upon the reckless conduct of Clara, and her future destiny, till his health would suffer. When utterance returned to his opened lips, which had essayed in vain to move, Sir John advanced to Sir Foster, and spoke kindly, but firmly.

"I have seen a dreadful quarrel between two people, who are my near relations, and who have been married three months: this is a sight, Sir Foster...."

"Plaguy devil!" muttered Sir Foster.

"I have seen great provocation on Clara's part, but I beseech you never to lay your hand upon my daughter, as you hope to see your own children happy in marriage."

"His boys are brutes already," exclaimed Clara, haughtily.

"Peace, Clara," replied her father, "and hear me, while I call upon *you*, by the affection I have ever felt, and the kindness I have shewn, to be gentle and obedient to your husband."

A laugh of contempt broke from Lady Kerrison. "Yes, papa, obey an hyena, and be gentle to a tyrant!"

"D— me, if I stand this!" cried Sir Foster, provoked beyond endurance, and, seizing a heavy volume from the table, he hurled it at Clara's head: it missed its aim, and fell at Christobelle's feet. Clara again laughed contemptuously. Christobelle rose in alarm, but her fears were not for herself; she threw her arms round Sir Foster, in terror, and implored him to overlook her sister's conduct. She found fluency of speech, as she besought him to bear with her temper, and take no notice of her remarks. She implored him to think of her dear father, and to promise he would never strike Clara, let her conduct be ever so provoking. "Oh, leave the room, Sir

Foster, when Clara becomes angry, but do not throw such dreadful things at her!—do not commit murder in your passion!"

Sir Foster winked his eye during this address, and smiled, but Christobelle could perceive all decorum was banished between them, for he replied with coarseness, "I'll serve her out, if she jaws in that style."

It was impossible to interfere with Sir Foster and his lady, when each party forgot prudence and propriety alike. It was but too evident that Clara disdained to conciliate, and that she rendered her husband furious by unfeminine and violent opposition. From the coarse mind of Sir Foster also, that mind which Sir John had deprecated — which his lady had palliated — which every one connected with Ripley deplored — from such a mind, under the influence of provocation, nothing but abusive language could proceed, or violent conduct be elicited. It was therefore incumbent upon Clara to obey the wishes of a man with whom her life must pass away in wrangling, should she oppose his measures. But Clara had never curbed the strength of her passions: her mother's influence had never been exerted to reach and amend that peccant part, and, as the wife of Sir Foster, those pas-

sions increased to the threatened destruction of her happiness and respectability. It was impossible the present state of things could exist. Sir Foster or Clara must yield in time, and who was to watch the conflict?

Sir John Wetheral placed his hand upon the bell-rope, and waved his hand to demand attention. He besought them to heed his words, ere he rang for the carriage to convey him from a scene which had harrowed up his soul; this was no time for reproach and recrimination; he would reproach no one; he perceived both parties were in fault, and he trusted they would both see their mutual error. "It was grand in a man," he said, "to overlook a wife's failings; her helplessness, her weakness, demanded indulgence, and a woman never looked so lovely in the eyes of God and man, as in her performance of the duties allotted her. He would now depart, firmly believing he was quitting two rational beings, responsible for their breach of vows to a higher authority than himself. He would hope all things; he would hope, nay, he was certain, each party regretted the transactions of the day, and he trusted all remembrance of its bitterness was ended. He must now return to Wetheral."

Sir Foster made no reply in words: he attended to his father-in-law's gentle admonitions, because his usual winking motions and smile evidenced his powers of hearing; but Clara betrayed her withdrawn attention by the half-closed eye and head averted. When her father approached to take leave, she saluted him with affection, and expressed a desire to see him often at Ripley.

"Come very often, papa, pray, and see if I am alive. Don't leave me quite in the power of the brutes around: the five boys are enough to kill a giantess, and the next book thrown at my head may do mischief."

Oh that propensity to repeat and allude to past disagreeables! Not a shadow of tact had descended to Clara from her mother, to preserve domestic peace. The reckless speech again woke up contention; for Sir Foster advocated his own system of education, by exclaiming,—"Hold your tongue, will you?"

"I shall *not* be silent," retorted Clara: "don't expect to make me subservient to your vulgar prejudices, as your first wife was compelled to be. I insist upon saying your five boys are like your terriers in every particular."

The presence of her father checked the action

which would, under other circumstances, have dealt heavy punishment upon the speaker. Sir Foster ground his teeth, but the closed fist attested his intention, and the respect which induced the effort to curb his resentment. Clara saw the effect of her father's presence upon his mind, and madly took advantage of the moment to continue her invectives.

"They are terriers in their features, terriers in disposition, and terriers in their feeding."

Sir Foster became pale with rage: he was a man of few words, but his wrath was terrible to witness. He called down every imprecation upon his lady's head, and vowed most fearfully to "wallop her" the first convenient opportunity. Sir John hastened Christobelle from the contemplation of such dreadful looks, and from the sound of such horrible words. He withdrew with her as their voices rose high in altercation, and left the scene of turbulence far, far behind.

Christobelle had indeed seen the misery of a match formed upon the baseless fabric of worldly riches. She saw it was unblest and full of woe. Their drive to Wetheral was silent and sad, for there was that upon the father's mind which banished repose. Clara's nature was too fear-

less and too violent to render her an object of esteem, or even to awaken compassion in her lot. Her determined insolence, and contemptuous bearing, towards her husband—her daring manner, and offensive observations, were insupportable to the eye and the ear. It was impossible to advocate the cause of a being, however youth might plead extenuation, who had deliberately and clandestinely married Sir Foster Kerrison, in defiance of her father's strongly expressed objections, yet, in three months' matrimony, dared to the uttermost the passions of her chosen companion for life.

Much as her father sorrowed over his daughter's destiny, he could not uphold her cause; her passions were too powerful, too unrestrained for his interference; he could not upbraid Sir Foster, when he had witnessed the provocation given by Clara, and he could not again offer his home to a disobedient wife. Clara must henceforth be a warning to her acquaintance, a beacon-light to warn them from the perils she had scorned, defied, and sunk under. But who had guided Clara to this perilous position? who had taught her youth to covet wealth, and stake her happiness against title and affluence without reflection?

Oh, mothers! what do you gain upon this pass-
g scene, by bartering your children's welfare for
tinkling sound?—what will you gain hereafter,
hen the souls committed to your care on earth
e required at your hands? Is the atheist, the
mbler, the reckless, and blasphemer, to receive
em, and become responsible for their lost state
the great account? I tell you it is not so;
u have sold their minds to mammon, and you
all answer for that you have received, and
ve not given back.

Lady Wetheral had discovered Thompson's
ght when Sir John and Christobelle returned
Wetheral, and her indignation was extreme.
o be left by a menial in that offensive manner
as degrading; but that Thompson should have
own from her duties, to enter matrimony, was
isgusting. Thompson marrying! and with all
he mystery of an heiress too! It was an insult
he had not believed Thompson would have pre-
umed to offer; but every thing was wrong,
very thing was most wretched since her daugh-
rs had married. What was now left to her
ut poor Sir John, who was half a methodist,
nd an awkward girl, who was as learned as she
as plain? It was very oddher intention to
sit Bedinfield had been frustrated. She sup-

posed all her children intended to decline her visits.

With these ideas and feelings, it was not to be supposed Lady Wetheral could be happy; and her disappointed mind preyed upon her health and temper. Christobelle was the victim of this state of things; she could never be sufficiently attentive or sufficiently agreeable; she was tiresome, awkward, or learned; she was to be an old maid, a nuisance in society, an arguing, philosophical excrescence, whom people would avoid and detest; she had not half the sense and conversation of poor, dear Thompson. Christobelle's spirits fled under constant and frivolous exertion of the power of tormenting. She was seated in the boudoir, with Lady Wetheral, one morning at work, not many days after the scene at Ripley; the irritability of her temper was increased by the recollection of former days and former employments. She commenced her usual complaints.—

"I think I am worse in health and spirits when I sit in this room; it puts me in mind of my poor daughters, who are gone. I am now quite deserted and forlorn; not one of them invites me to their home!"

Christobelle mentioned Brierly and the affection of its inmates.

"Fiddlestick, Bell! you are always quoting Brierly! I don't like Boscawen. I have no opinion of a man who allows his wife to be driven by a pair of horses, when he can afford four — I dislike avarice. And Isabel would make me so nervous, by carrying a great heavy baby about, and disordering her dress! I shall never visit Brierly."

"The Pynsents will be home soon, mamma."

"What's that to me, Bell? You don't suppose I shall stay at Hatton, and hear Mrs. Pynsent's remarks about Ripley, and Clara's folly in coming to an open rupture with her husband? The Tom Pynsents should have accepted Hatton when it was first proposed to them. I shall not visit there till Anna Maria is mistress of the property."

"But you will go to poor Clara, mamma."

"What am I to go to Ripley for?—to see my daughter ill-treated, or be treated myself with indifference? Clara had no business to make herself conspicuous by quarrelling. I wish, Bell, when you do vouchsafe to talk, that you would choose better subjects to converse upon. Your poor father's education has only fitted you to be a nuisance. I hate girls with books in their hands, and dulness on their tongues."

Christobelle changed the conversation.

"Mamma, your worsted work looks beautiful upon that ottoman; I could almost fancy that rose had perfume, it is so natural."

"Just the opinion of a girl who follows a man's occupation, instead of her own feminine amusements: had you any knowledge of work, you would have thought otherwise." Her mother gave a glance of disdain at the ottoman.

"I assure you, mamma, I understand all the stitches. Miss Boscawen taught me."

"One old maid teaching another, Bell."

"I don't think I shall dislike being single, mamma. Miss Boscawen looks so beautifully dressed, so clean, not at all like your descriptions of old maids."

"If you had any anxiety to be established like your sisters, Bell, you might please and amuse me in my seclusion. No one comes near me now, not even Miss Wycherly, who was always at Wetheral with Julia. I don't understand it. You might bring about an intimacy with Frank Kerrison, Bell, and ask him here to read with you. He will inherit Ripley, you know."

"Mamma, I don't like Frank Kerrison, he swears so."

"Nonsense, you matter-of-fact thing: if he

swears now, it does not follow he will always swear."

"But papa says, it is seldom left off. I don't like Frank, he is so violent with his sisters."

"But you would be his wife, not his sister, child. What stupid notions you have!"

The hall-bell rang violently. Lady Wetheral's eyes brightened.—

"Some one has arrived at last to amuse me. I hope it is Penelope come to ask us to her marriage. She ought to do so, for Julia's sake."

The door opened, and Clara entered, to their great astonishment. She seated herself with perfect coolness.

"There," said she, "now let the brute seek me in my father's house!"

"My dear Clara, what brings you to Wetheral? — is Sir Foster with you? — will you dine here?" asked Lady Wetheral, in delighted accents. "I cannot tell you how a little society charms me in this dull place. You have made up that foolish fracas, my love, and you are both come to dine with me: is that it?"

"I am certainly come to dinner, and to sleep too," replied Clara, taking up the work which Christobelle had dropped in surprise. "Where

is your thimble, Bell? I will finish this sprig for you."

"But, Sir Foster, my love—where is Sir Foster?"

"I really cannot say: perhaps, kicking the nurse-maids, as I am not at Ripley to stand in their place."

"Are you alone, then, Clara?"

"I hope so. I mean to be alone for some time."

"My dear Clara, you surely have not been quarrelling again!"

"Again! oh, no! it has been one long-continued quarrel ever since I married!"

"I am really shocked at your conduct, my dear love. How often I have implored you all to avoid scenes when you married! My dear Clara, you must remember my earnest instructions. This is a sad dereliction from good taste!"

"You should not have married me to a brute," exclaimed Clara, becoming impetuous.

"Clara, I was not at your side, when you eloped with Sir Foster," cried her mother, in a vindicating tone.

"Perhaps not; but you may remember the means you took to induce me to elope, mamma.

You did not know the moment; but you were aware of the intention, brought on by your own hints and anxieties to see me at Ripley. Bell can bear witness to your remarks and innuendoes."

"I am sure Bell cannot," replied Lady Wetheral, in alarm.

"Bell can, though! Bell, I charge you to reply to my question. Did not my mother induce me to run away with my brute? Speak truly."

"You cannot say so, Bell," said Lady Wetheral, bursting into tears.

"Bell, answer truly!" and Clara dragged her from her chair, to stand before her. Christobelle struggled to get free; but Clara grasped her with a force she could not resist. "Now, Bell, tell my mother the glaring truth!"

"I will not be questioned—I will not speak—let me go, Clara, let me go!"

"Go, then, stupid fool, too weak to utter the truth!" Clara released her grasp, and Christobelle fled to a distant chair, to remain a spectator of the ensuing scene.

"Clara," said her mother, reproachfully, "what could induce you to blame *me*, for your own impolitic conduct? If I wished to see you the wife of a man standing high in situation, I

never counselled you to forget the proprieties of life."

"You held up Sir Foster to my view, as a match which you prayed for, and desired me never to relinquish," retorted Clara, with passionate energy. "You have married me to a heartless brute, and now you turn against me!"

"No, Clara, I do not deserve that reproach; your temper is too violent for your peace, or mine." Her mother wept.

"I know my temper is like the whirlwind, but you never complained of it, or subdued it! You only bid me conceal it when Lucy came here, till I was actually the wife of a monster! I cannot conceal it now, for it chafes under ill treatment. Oh, if you had but checked it in childhood, to meet this extremity!" Clara grew almost madly passionate and vehement; she threw herself upon her knees before her weeping mother. "If ever my misery exceeds my forbearance, it will be your doing, oh! hard-hearted mother! You have sold me to a wretch who will drive me to desperation, and you must answer for it! My temper is warm—I know it—but any other man would not have made me despise him so horribly. I have provoked him, and I *will* provoke him; but it is your doing, for

I did not understand a man's brutal nature. I thought they were all like my father!"

Lady Wetheral became almost convulsed with agitation. "Ring for Thompson — Thompson, Bell!" Alas! Thompson was no longer at Wetheral; but Christobelle was acquainted with her mother's ways, and brought the usual remedies to her hands. She did not avail herself of their use; her mind was too deeply occupied to heed them: she pushed her daughter aside, without being aware of the action.

"Clara, I never thought a child's reproach would rise against me! I did not imagine a daughter could raise her voice against a parent, who had sought so unceasingly the happiness of her married life."

"In what way, in what way?" demanded Clara, throwing herself on the ground with a movement of despair.

"I secured the luxuries of life to you, Clara."

"Oh, folly, folly!"

"I secured to you a proper position in society, Clara."

"Oh, folly, folly!" continued Lady Kerrison.

"I was anxious to see you enter life, courted, admired, and envied, my dear Clara."

"*Who* admires and envies me?" cried Clara,

starting to her feet. "*Who* envies my situation, or would change places with such a wretched creature? By the Heaven which witnessed the sacrifice of my youth and hopes of happiness, I would willingly exchange with the humblest woman who breaks stones for her daily bread, and devours it in peace! Oh, Chrystal, never marry while you live!"

The exertion of complaint, and the powerful passions which warred in the soul of Clara, exhausted her strength after this vehement exposition of her suffering; and she lay upon the sofa, like a child who had sobbed itself into silence. It was a solemn sight to see so young and fair a creature, so deeply engaged in the strife of passion and contention; the expression of her countenance was already tinged with angry feelings, and her beautiful mouth was losing its attitude of repose: if such was Lady Kerrison's vehemence of character at this early period of her marriage, what would become of her in after-years?

Clara fell into a doze, which continued till the hall-bell again announced a visiter. Lady Wetheral, also, endeavoured to acquire a composure which would not appear at her call; Lady Kerrison's reproaches had startled and de-

stroyed her tranquillity. Her hands trembled under their efforts to resume their occupation, and sighs burst from her bosom. Christobelle was glad the bustle of a fresh arrival drew near the door, to divert her thoughts from her sister's sorrow. Clara started from her sleep, at the sound of approaching voices, and rose from her couch. The servants announced Sir Foster Kerrison.

Sir Foster walked fiercely towards his lady, without taking notice of Lady Wetheral or Christobelle, who stood amazed, as he advanced to the sofa; he did not even wink his eye. Clara remained in haughty expectation of his address, her head thrown back, and her eye flashing defiance. "Now, sir, are you come to beard me at Wetheral!" was her indignant exclamation; "are you come here to prove how brutally you can treat a woman, even in her father's house?"

"Go home!" cried Sir Foster. "Go home this instant!"

"I will never return, if there is a roof elsewhere to shelter me!" returned his lady. "I am weary of existence under a tyrant's power."

"You won't? who is master at Ripley?" Sir Foster raised Clara in his arms, and, in spite of her resistance, he was carrying her from the

boudoir. Lady Wetheral endeavoured to interfere; she besought Sir Foster not to commit himself before the servants—before the world—by using force towards his wife; but he heeded not her observation, or her prayer. Clara was borne into the hall, unable to contend with the grasp which detained her prisoner. In vain she screamed, "Oh, father, my father, save me!" he was not within hearing. In vain she vehemently threatened to plague her husband, till life should be a burden to him: Sir Foster made no reply. Before the household, who assembled at the piercing cries of Lady Kerrison, before the Ripley servants, who were stationed with the carriage, did Sir Foster bear his lady to the hall-door, and, ordering his footmen to their post, Clara was placed in the carriage by main force. She struggled violently to regain her liberty, but her delicate limbs were unequal to the conflict; she sank back almost fainting with her useless efforts; and, Sir Foster taking his place by her side, nodded and winked, and chuckled, as he exclaimed, "Done it well, by Jove! Jerry, drive like winking!" The Ripley carriage dashed furiously down the avenue.

Lady Wetheral felt intensely the publicity which accompanied Sir Foster Kerrison's re-

sumption of his wife's society. The action itself was disagreeable — must be most offensively disagreeable to Clara — but the manner of the thing, the public display which surrounded the whole affair, was inexcusable! It was beyond a doubt now, the affairs of Ripley were discussed in the servants' halls and dining-rooms throughout the neighbourhood — a most horrible idea! People might be as unhappy as they pleased, and quarrel whenever they felt inclined so to do, but it was an offence against society, to perpetrate little misunderstandings before the world. Nothing could be in such wretched taste. Clara was very foolish and impolitic to irritate a man like Sir Foster, and blame her for the results. She had always cautioned Clara and the rest of her girls against scenes.

The remembrance of her salutary cautions, however, did not operate upon Lady Wetheral's nerves, or bring calmness to her mind. Clara's words rang in her ears; and her figure, as she knelt in the attitude of upbraiding, glided before her eyes. She could not forget those piercing expressions, "If ever my misery exceeds my forbearance, it will be your doing, oh! hard-hearted mother!" The voice sounded through the

house, it followed her into the dressing-room; she complained to Christobelle that it would haunt her in her sleep, and that her death would be caused by filial ingratitude, after all her anxieties to promote her child's welfare. "I am sure these scenes are enough to destroy me, Bell, and I think Thompson might have spared her part in the transaction. She made my dose of sal-volatile exactly to my taste, and now in my extremity I dare not touch your mixtures, for I dare say they would excoriate my throat. Mrs. Bevan will never be what Thompson was; she looks perfectly bewildered when I require any thing. Clara has killed me: ingratitude is, indeed, hard to bear, and it will disgust me from making any further sacrifices on my own part for others. I shall not concern myself with your marriage, Bell. Marry whom you please; but, if you marry less well than your sisters, never come into my presence." Christobelle promised never to marry without her concurrence.

"So you all say, and act in defiance when opportunity offers. Say nothing to your father, Bell, about Clara; it was lucky he rode to Shrewsbury this morning; he would have laid the blame upon me, too; he always lectures me

now: say nothing about it, pray. What is that?" Her ladyship started. "Oh, it is that ungrateful voice; it spoke quite plain to me! I am sure I shall have a nervous attack, if that voice haunts me."

Clara's reproaches had sunk deeply into Lady Wetheral's heart, though she affected to carry off this impression with bravery of manner. In vain she took repeated doses of camphor-julep to still her nerves, and recover a portion of her spirits; the trembling of her limbs increased, and she acknowledged it would be impossible to meet poor Sir John at dinner; Christobelle must take her place, and invent any excuse she pleased for her absence, so that the truth was concealed from her husband. She was on no account to hint to him the transactions of the morning. It was fortunate for Christobelle that her father made few comments upon his lady's illness during their solitary meal; but his disposition was perfectly free from suspicion or curiosity, and conversation turned upon other subjects. Christobelle was delighted by one piece of intelligence on his part. The Tom Pynsents were to arrive in England the following week. Mrs. Pynsent and Mrs. Hancock were in Lewis's shop, and they informed him of their instant re-

turn to Hatton. Paris had not amused Tom, and he was longing to return to England; they had even come to the resolution of never again quitting Shropshire. Mrs. Pynsent was full of bustle and happiness at the idea — she would now get Tom back, and thank God all his dogs were in fine condition—not a puppy lost. Tom would find every thing as he left it, and Sal Hancock must be off to Lea. Mrs. Hancock winked her eye at her sister's remark.

"I tell you what, Pen, Tom will know a thing or two, when he comes from France; ten to one but I get into fashion this time."

"You be hanged, Sally Hancock!"

"They are not so whitewashed in France, Pen. I'll make a good bet our Tommy has had a 'cherry amy' by this time."

"None of your surmises, Sally Hancock; you know I can't bear any thing said about Tom. I'll be hanged if I take you home for that fib!"

"Faith, you must carry me somewhere, Pen," replied Mrs. Hancock, coolly; "you can't leave me and my game-leg here."

"Hold your tongue, then, about Tom and 'cherry amys.'"

Sir John thought it was time to make his bow to the ladies, and he quitted the shop, leav-

ing the sisters in high altercation. The quarrels of Mrs. Pynsent and Mrs. Hancock were fortunately as short as they were frequent and public. Ten minutes after Sir John's departure from Lewis's shop, he saw Mrs. Hancock upon her sister's arm, walking with great difficulty and in apparent pain; but both ladies were laughing immoderately, and attracting the notice of the passers by from the loudness of their conversation.

Christobelle trusted that Tom Pynsent's return would operate advantageously upon her mother's spirits, and assist the recovery of her tone of mind, which appeared sinking. She could not understand the extraordinary change which had taken place in a person naturally so active and lively. It appeared as though Clara's marriage had acted as a sedative upon her mental and physical energies, and numbed their vigour. She had sunk rapidly into a nervous, solitary being, unequal to every exertion, indifferent to her husband's society, and dead to all resources. Yet was Sir Foster Kerrison the long-coveted object of her wishes, and every thought of her heart had been given to the accomplishment of that most desired union. Clara married Sir Foster, and obtained Ripley. What then caused

this lassitude of body and mind? this melancholy exhibition of energies unemployed? of time heavily passed in dull complaining, and nervous misery? Her daughters were highly and wealthily established; and her views for each had been promptly and successfully fulfilled.

What *could* produce such a fearful change in the graceful Lady Wetheral, once, and so lately too, the gayest of the gay; ever animated, ever pleasing, even to those who knew and feared her matrimonial speculations? Because, all that was triumphant had fled;—because all that was most exciting had passed away. The hopes and fears which had given zest to life were unfortunately at rest, and there was nothing now to lead on the energies, and compel exertion. The cause was withdrawn, and the effect was fatal to a happiness which consisted in ceaseless anxiety to procure establishments for her children. All solicitude was now ended, and the mind sank, unemployed, into listlessness. Every thing became gloomy in its routine; every thing was conducted in its usual daily forms, but there was no longer the spirit which gave animation to ceremony. The shadow still remained, but the substance had departed, which threw a mantle of gaiety and brilliance over the proceedings of Wetheral Castle.

CHAPTER XVI.

Nothing could exceed Tom Pynsent's pleasure at beholding himself again in England, and at Hatton. The Wetheral party were summoned by the warm-hearted, affectionate mother to attend the arrival of her son, and rejoice over his "second birth;" and a large party of relatives were invited to dine at Hatton, and celebrate his return. Mrs. Pynsent particularly desired Christobelle might appear upon the occasion. She thought the young ones had suffered enough in the matrimonial line; and, as that "poor bit of a girl was not old enough to be hawked after the men," she thought the lanky thing ought to be allowed to enjoy herself for a few years, and begin her pleasures by rejoicing over Tom's arrival. Sir John Wetheral decided that Christobelle should accept the invitation; and his lady offered no objection, though her daughter could not feel gratified by her remarks.

"Oh! go, by all means, Bell, as Mrs. Py sent wishes you to meet Anna Maria. You an your father, of course, must hunt in couples your tastes are so similar and so agreeable. I am much too nervous to join that coarse party. Of course, Mrs. Hancock will be there; I cannot sit in Mrs. Hancock's company. Anna Maria will come to see me some early day. I must beg of you not to colour up so vulgarly, when any one addresses you, and try not to sit down to any one's table so hungry and thirsty as you manage to do at home. Pray, eat a meal before you set off, to prevent that dreadfully famished look, Bell."

"I am always hungry with exercise, mamma."

"Nothing can be so insupportably in bad taste. I shall not be at Hatton to shudder under your voracious *exposé*, but I shall imagine you committing a thousand errors. I hope the Farnboroughs will not be present to observe my youngest daughter. I suppose I must be content to remain solitary, and submit to Bevan's attentions for that day. My daughters marrying so early has left me a poor, solitary being."

Christobelle was anxious to be useful, and sh tried to look cheerful, as she exclaimed—

"I will remain at home then, mamma, if you please."

"Not as a *companion*, Bell. I cannot fancy you presume to offer yourself as my companion. Oh, no! go with your father, by all means."

Christobelle was accustomed to be treated with petulance; it was vain to hope for any change for the better, and her delight at the idea of her visit sheltered her heart under this blow. How wearying it was to endeavour to please, and yet to prove ever unsuccessful! But the visit to Hatton would balance much annoyance: she looked forward with intense eagerness to the first dinner engagement which had varied her existence; and she felt doubly grateful that her first appearance in public should take place without the fearful accompaniment of her mother's presence. Her father was sure to be kind and encouraging. How slowly did the days appear to pass by, ere she could be dressed for the festivities of Hatton!

A select number of friends assembled at Hatton on the eventful morning of Tom Pynsent's arrival. Sir John Wetheral and Christobelle arrived first, and the Wycherlys, Charles Spottiswoode, and Mrs. Hancock followed in their own order. *They* were allowed to witness

first words, the look, and the affecti
brace of her only child.

Mrs. Pynsent wandered round the r
perambulated the Hall, as the time st
wards the expected moment of meet
hounds were stationed in the park,
whipper-in, to greet their master an
honour, by baying deep and loud a
towards his home. The men were
their hunting costume by Mrs. Pynse
that her own dear boy might be surr
all he best loved, in the style he most
"for, married or unmarried, her T
love the dogs and his old mother to
time." Mrs. Hancock sat silent and
her sister's restless movements rous
tention.

crossed, and his face as calm as if Tom was no son of his."

Mrs. Hancock winked upon the company as she called out to Mr. Pynsent: — "I say, Bob Pynsent, Pen may have—"

Mrs. Pynsent turned quickly upon her sister.

"Sally Hancock, you be quiet now. You know Tom and Bobby, too, won't endure your jokes. If you begin joking, you will be sent back to Lea before Tom arrives."

Mrs. Hancock was not in the least degree ruffled by the threat.

"None of your great guns, Pen. I'm as silent as a mouse. I thought I should never be silent again though, when we caught Charley Snooks in the booth that race-day."

"Sally Hancock, what things you do remember! Shall we ever forget squeezing into the pit of the play-house, and finding Polly Sydenham twigging us from the side-box?"

Again both sisters were plunged into a recital of past levities, and were laughing immoderately, when the hounds sent forth their cry, and ran in full chase round the swell of the park which fronted the entrance to Hatton. They were laid on the scent of a red-herring, which had been previously dragged round the

mode of testifying her delight at his re
cry of the dogs was a signal to rush t
hall-door, and Tom Pynsent was w
hat, and tally-hooing with all his mig
carriage tore up the serpentine roa
lodge-gates. Mrs. Pynsent was in e
joy.

"Here, hallo, Bill! fetch your mas
out in a minute; he has been saddled
hours. I know what my Tom will d
mother knows him well. Jack Ball
you, and turn the colts into the p
along, boys! Look at him—bless hi
Sally Hancock, let us have a cheer fo

Sally Hancock was nothing loth;
dered her stick with the air of a cor
both ladies startled their companions b
a loud and protracted huzza. Tom

arms once more encircled her darling son. She hung round his neck entranced.

"My blessed Tom, my only and sweet boy, your poor mother is happy to get you back again. The dogs and colts, Tom, are well; the hounds all well, my Tommy. Your poor mother has looked well after them. And there's your father, waiting, Tom, to shake hands—and here's Sally Hancock!"

Mrs. Pynsent withdrew her arms reluctantly, and her son advanced to shake hands with his father. Mr. Pynsent's mild countenance shone with pleasure as he congratulated him upon his return, and confessed how much he had missed his society. Tom Pynsent was in tearing spirits at finding himself upon Hatton ground, listening to affectionate speeches delivered in pure English again. He shook hands with every one, and saluted every lady.

"How do you all do? How do you do, my fat aunt, Hancock? How do you do, Pen? Why, Spottiswoode, have you waited for me to be your bridegroom's man? How do you do, Sir John? I have brought home my little woman, quite rosy, you see—here she is. So, little Miss with the long name, how are you? Upon my soul, you all look 'grass!'" Tom

Pynsent held his hand to his mouth, and turned again to the hall-door.

"Tally-ho, there!—bring 'em round, Barton!"

The saddled horse was trotted up, and Tom Pynsent sprang upon his back. He waved his hand to the company.

"I use no ceremony.— One gallop round the park, and I'll be amongst you again. Tally-ho, there. Tally-ho!"

The mettled steed plunged and reared under the tightened rein, while his master spoke; but, in an instant, he dashed from the door, and the horse and his rider were seen flying down the park, followed by the whole complement of dogs and attendants. Mrs. Pynsent gazed after her son with proud delight.

"I say, Bobby, there he goes! Didn't I tell you he would love to see his dogs round him! Bless him, his mother knew his tastes. There's his little wife gone off with her father! She does not stay to look at Tom. *She* doesn't care for his whims, Sally Hancock — how should a Wetheral care for any thing? — I don't, and I can't, abide a woman who is indifferent to Tom's whims"

"Don't mob the Wetherals, Pen; it's only the old lady: *they* can't help their mother."

well Tom sits a horse!" continued Mrs.
who could not withdraw her eyes, or
m one object, for a moment. "There
neck or nothing!"
ynsent reminded his lady that Anna
as in the drawing-room, and that she
ely welcomed her. Mrs. Pynsent snap-
ingers.
is my son, and I'll attend to no one
turns. Pen is with the young woman.
tir till Tom comes back. If the young
oved Tom as I love him, she would be
him in his delight there, looking so
and happy! I don't like her for leaving

Iancock was quite of her opinion, and
sent was softened by her coalition.
Hancock, you shall dine here, to-day,
ll promise to be quiet."
, Pen, what do I *ever* say?"
afraid of you, Sally Hancock. You
m and Bob won't bear your remarks.
w you never were fit for ladies' society,
married that Hancock."
t was the matter with Hancock, except
ipsy or angry, Pen?"

can't endure your remarks.

"Fiddle diddle, I'll be very good will, *indeed*, Pen."

Christobelle lingered at the hall-d the cheering sight of the hounds, a Tom Pynsent's enjoyment. When was lost to her view, she flew ag drawing-room, and seated herself a ria's feet. Christobelle gazed at he fancied four months' absence had change. Mrs. Tom Pynsent spoke bility, and her manner was less pleasing. A very high colour wa once pale cheeks, and her eyes were bright and sparkling: altogether, thought her sister Pynsent very mu When she had again received a sal her lips, and a brief compliment upo

able, shocking—but the Count de Nolis assured me the march of improvement had begun, and would be very evident when he returned. Tom did not like Paris. He felt the want of sporting, and those sort of noisy pursuits which are disgusting to the Parisians. The Count de Nolis introduced us to many delightful French families. I must confess I did not like it at first, but I was sorry to quit Paris. English customs are so wearisome, after the ease of French society!"

Sir John Wetheral looked surprised at Anna Maria's sentiments, and he glanced his eye upon Christobelle with an anxious expression, as she sat gazing at her sister. Miss Wycherly was entertained beyond expression by the change in her manners, and amused herself by calling forth Anna Maria's remarks. She inquired who the Count de Nolis was, who figured so much in their train.

"The Count! Oh, the dearest and liveliest creature you ever saw. He is engaged to pay Tom a visit, or rather myself, for I don't think Tom liked him. He will visit us in the autumn. I have been obliged to bring a French maid home, to dress me, because a lady's maid here is only fit to dress an English woman."

"Have you renounced the title of Englis woman, Anna Maria?" asked her father, gravel

"No, indeed, papa. I shall always be English but Félicé has such a way of blending colour and making up dresses!—You shall judge fo yourself. Is there a party, to-day, at dinner or, are we to have a *soirée?*"

Mrs. Pynsent and her son entered the room followed by Mrs. Hancock, as Anna Maria spoke Tom Pynsent advanced to his lady.

"Well, little woman, chatting away!—D you see, Sir John, how rosy we are by our trip I wish you could have seen her talking an chirping to De Nolis. You would have bee surprised."

"My heavens! what a couple of painte cheeks!" exclaimed Mrs. Pynsent, in a tone o horror.

"A couple of what?" cried her son, quickly Anna Maria became perceptibly distressed: he husband surveyed her with looks of perfect sa tisfaction and admiration, entirely unconscious of the cause of her agitation.

"Yes, she is rosy enough now, bless her! am glad France has done such wonders for m wife: she looked as healthy as the best of the in Paris. De Nolis advised her to rouge at firs

No, none of that, says I. No wife of mine shall paint, like Jezebal. I was right, you see, for her cheeks soon grew blooming as a rose—didn't they?" he added, chucking her under the chin.

Miss Wycherly smiled. Anna Maria recovered her self-possession, and began a tirade against English costume, without answering her mother-in-law's observation. She spoke so much more rapidly than "Miss Wetheral" had ever spoken. She seemed to have acquired so much alertness of speech and manner—so much forwardness in making remarks—her eyes were so bright, and her cheeks bore such a deep *couleur de rose*, that Christobelle sat in fixed attention, watching her movements. She thought Anna Maria remarkably improved in person; she admired the vivacity of her countenance, and manner; but she was no longer the simple and elegant Anna Maria, so gentle and so mild—that many opinions had decided her to be insipid. Every one appeared watching her with nearly equal surprise and attention. Mrs. Pynsent stood with her arms akimbo, and her eyes rooted upon her son; but the others were all earnestly listening to Mrs. Tom Pynsent, as she commented upon the dreadful *tournure* of the English fashionist.

"I assure you, Penelope, you could discern

an Englishwoman the instant she appeared in the street. Her walk is firm and good, but her shawl and bonnet is only English. I had such a lecture from De Nolis! He made me put aside all my Shropshire habiliments, and I was obliged to be entirely refitted by Le Boi."

"Well, by Jove!" cried Tom Pynsent, "that was not *my* doing: De Nolis was the ladies' favourite, and he turned my little wife's head about dress. I liked her just as well in her stout silk pelisse, that put me in mind of Wetheral and Shrewsbury."

Anna Maria playfully placed her hand upon her husband's lips.

"Do be quiet, Tom, and don't be so very English."

Tom Pynsent kissed the little hand which enforced silence, and held it in his own capacious palm. Anna Maria drew her chair closer to her husband, and, leaning her head against his side as he stood near, continued her discourse.

"Upon my word, papa, I liked Paris dearly, but Tom complained of this, and disliked that. He would not eat his dinner, because it was stewed frogs; he said he would not eat frogs—he would not drink sour wine—he would not do any thing to be comfortable."

"I wanted to come home in a fortnight," said Tom, still playing with his lady's hand; "but my little wife would not listen to me. De Nolis and herself led me a pretty dance, I can tell you. Hang me, if I understood their jargon in Paris, and I only knew Jack Smith, and Tom Biddulph, to talk with. Spottiswoode was at Florence; De Nolis jabbered away every where with my wife; while I and Jack amused ourselves with quizzing Biddulph. My wife had never any leisure to write home, or talk to *me*."

"My dear Tom!"

"No, I vow you were always laughing and talking with that French fellow, and his cursed broken English."

"But who ever saw me without *you*, Tom? and what pleasure should I have had, if you had not been close to me?"

Anna Maria clasped her husband's hand with an air and manner so affectionate, that all hearts present felt assured of her domestic happiness. Her father's expressive face became enlivened, and Mrs. Pynsent almost involuntarily gave Anna Maria a startling slap upon her shoulder, as she cried,—

I'm a happy woman, since my Tom is loved by us all alike. I tell you what, young woman,

I fancied you could not love my son, because you did not remain to witness his delight with the hounds; but now, I see you *do* love him, though you will never understand his old mother's fondness."

Anna Maria started at the blow, but she held out her hand to Mrs. Pynsent, and assured her every one must love Tom who lived with him. He had lingered in Paris against his will to please *her*. He had suffered every disagreeable annoyance in silence to give *her* satisfaction; and Tom had never objected to any whim or amusement required by herself. How then could she do otherwise than love him beyond every earthly creature?

Tom Pynsent looked all astonishment during the dialogue which passed between his wife and mother. It did not occur to him that his Anna Maria's love was less sincere than his mother's affection: and as to his wife's recapitulation of his virtues, "Who the devil married a woman unless he meant to indulge her?"

This little scene, and Anna Maria's public testimony in favour of her husband's kindness had great effects, however, naturally and unsuspiciously as it had been spoken. Mrs. Pynsent was charmed by her daughter-in-law's simple

and affectionate statement, and she was the head-piece at Hatton. From that moment every good feeling was enlisted on Anna Maria's side by Mrs. Pynsent; and her fondness for her daughter threatened to equal the affection she bore her son. She told her sister, Hancock, Anna Maria might paint her cheeks as scarlet as the Babylonian woman's gown if she liked, *she* would raise no objection. She cared for nothing but Tom, and if his wife loved him and made him happy, she might paint and talk of that Frenchman as much as she pleased.

The dinner-party appeared to Christobelle's eyes the *ne plus ultra* of human happiness. She was attended to by every person; and no one appeared startled by her awkwardness, or the vulgarity of her manners. Lady Wetheral's searching eye was not present; her severe remarks did not sound in her ear, and she enjoyed profound peace of mind and body. No subsequent dinner-party ever equalled that day in its effects upon her head and heart. She sat between her dear father and Charles Spottiswoode, enjoying their conversation, and looking upon happy faces. Miss Wycherly's lively spirits were ever amusing, and her spirited dialogues with her cousin Tom appeared to Christobelle to be the

sion of figure and countenance was th
treme hauteur, and she did not look
dress Sir Foster during the evening.
himself had regained his usual "*fa*
since his last appearance. When th
men returned into the drawing-room
summons to tea, Sir Foster deposite
in an arm-chair, without addressing
neighbours. He looked on the an
and the different groupes with a smile
stretched to his utmost length; his e
with tolerable rapidity, and a subdue
every now and then evinced that his
ceived pleasure from some part of th
sation which reached his ear at interv
alone preserved a haughty silence t
appeared cold and indignant. Lucy

Clara do quarrel so dreadfully, that we cannot expect any one to come near the house." Here Lucy lowered her voice. "There was such a scene the day papa brought Clara away from Wetheral! Oh! Miss Chrystal, what dreadful things they said to each other! Papa, you know, is very violent, though he looks so still and quiet, and Clara was very provoking. Papa struck her once, and yet she would not be silent; she was very insolent, and papa threatened to turn her out of the house before the butler. It was very dreadful. Well, Clara ran away, and papa, you know, brought her back. Good gracious! how Clara did abuse him in the hall before all the servants! Papa only laughed then. I assure you they quarrelled this morning worse than ever; papa forgets as soon as it is over, but Clara keeps worry, worry, worry, till another quarrel is begun. I wish some one would ask me to stay with them: Lady Wetheral promised to have me with her; but I have never been asked since Clara married papa."

Christobelle mentioned her mother's illness, and her lowness of spirits.

"I am very sorry. Ripley is nothing now but a scene of quarrels. I was not aware of Clara's temper at Wetheral. I fancied her

quick-feeling, but not violent. I assure you she makes papa worse, by her provoking manner and her determination to have the last word. What can it signify who has the first or last word in a quarrel?"

Christobelle was equally surprised at Lucy's description of Clara's talents for tormenting. She knew her disposition was very warm, and that she could be roused into violence; but she had never evinced a disposition to provoke. Christobelle had always considered her too proud to descend into wanton provocation, and too indifferent to her husband, to endure altercation after the cause had passed away, which provoked resentment. Clara's worst feelings were perhaps roused into action by Sir Foster's violence. Had her good genius interfered, to prevent the unhappy union of two beings so ill suited to each other, Clara had been a happier and better woman, and Sir Foster a more respectable and intelligent neighbour and friend. Christobelle looked at Clara as Lucy proceeded in her remarks, and could perceive her brow lowered, and her handsome mouth compressed. The cause of the morning's quarrel, as detailed by Lucy, was indeed frivolous, and wretched in its folly.

"That horrible fishmonger was at Ripley this morning, and Clara began vexing papa with the old affair over again — good gracious! how she did irritate him! Well, papa never forgets to revenge himself at the moment, so he went into the servants' hall, and brought a large fish into the sitting-room — goodness, how it smelled! Papa chuckled very much, so I knew he was preparing for mischief; and he threw the creature into Clara's lap, upon her beautiful silk dress — upon my honour! Clara told him he was a brute, too brutish for his own servants' hall; and there was such a dialogue! I ran away; but the servants listened at the door, and heard it all. Pelham says it was a proper Billingsgate on papa's side, and only just 'over the way' on Clara's part. Papa has forgot it now; but Clara will remember it for a month to come."

This was a sad prospect: Clara, so young and inexperienced, was already wedded to dissention, and beginning her young career of life in bitterness! Clara, full of spirits, and energy of character, was deepening the shades of evil, by an unwomanly and improper contention with the husband she had chosen against her father's wishes. What must be the consequence of powerful passions constantly in collision between

Sir Foster and Lady Kerrison, since their early matrimony was so discordant? Miss Wycherly spoke anxiously and feelingly upon the subject to Anna Maria.

"This is a fearful match, my dear Mrs. Tom, and Ripley will be the grave of your sister's respectability. The Kerrisons' quarrels are already the topic of conversation at every table where your family are not present. Can you advise Lady Kerrison to be patient? — will she bear any interference?"

Anna Maria hoped all things, when they were more settled at Hatton. Tom would perhaps interfere a little, and if any one could bring things about, she was sure it would be Tom, he had such a peculiarly agreeable manner. She would speak to Tom upon the subject.

Clara's eyes glanced towards the groupe, and she rose to join them.

"What are you all chatting about so earnestly?" she observed, as they made room for her. She seated herself between her sisters. "Go on with your subject: what was it?"

Miss Wycherly answered for all.

"We were talking of matrimony, Lady Kerrison."

Clara's eyes sparkled with a thousand fires, as she slightly waved her hand.

"Let me continue it with you, Miss Wycherly, for I am able to speak from experience. Who is counsel for that state? I am decidedly upon the other side."

"We were only observing how much power the woman possessed over the man's mind, by gentleness, patience, and soft words, under trials, my dear Lady Kerrison."

"Gentleness! patience!" remarked Clara, with a laugh of disdain, — "ask my brute any thing patiently!"

Anna Maria caught her hand, as she extended it scornfully towards Sir Foster.

"Now, dear Clara, don't be energetic. I will ask Tom what he thinks. Tom always says things so agreeably."

"I will say what is true, if it proves disagreeable," replied Clara, withdrawing her hand from Anna Maria's light grasp, and again pointing attention, by a graceful movement, to Sir Foster, who sat silently winking his eye. "If there is a creature born to be a blessing to woman—patient, gentle, and interesting—look at *that* man."

Sir Foster winked violently. Anna Maria bent towards Lady Kerrison.

"Hush, my dear sister; do not offend Sir Foster, I beseech you; pray do not attract people's notice. My dear Clara, forbear!"

"Nay, he is attractive enough in himself," observed Lady Kerrison, in raised tones; "no words of mine can exalt him higher among the brute creation, than he stands by nature."

Mrs. Tom Pynsent became alarmed at her sister's audacity, and she signed to her husband, who was seated by Mrs. Tyndal, to join the little circle. He advanced immediately.

"Well, my little wife, what are you wishing? The dear Count is not here, is he? therefore you want *me* among you."

"Now, be quiet, Tom." Mrs. Tom Pynsent looked round to discover a disengaged chair: her husband saw the inquiring look, and he seated himself upon the carpet.

"Well, now, what was I summoned for?"

"My dear Tom," replied his lady, smiling, "I particularly wish you to give me your opinion upon matrimony before the young ladies here assembled."

"*My* matrimony, if you please," observed Lady Kerrison—"you are requested to take a

comprehensive view of *my* matrimony." She looked haughtily towards Sir Foster, who sat within hearing. "There sits my animal: shall we decide upon the species?"

"Hush, Clara, hush!" softly whispered Mrs. Tom Pynsent.

"My dear Lady Kerrison!" burst from the lips of Miss Wycherly.

"Every one has a name and a place," continued Lady Kerrison, heedless of all caution and counsel. "Pray, Tom Pynsent, assert your opinions as plainly as I do mine, and tell me what a mother deserves, who weds her young and unsuspecting child to a brute, without contemplating her fate in prospect? Pray, Tom Pynsent, what is the conclusion of that fate? Will it rest in dull misery, or will the indignant spirit burst its fetters?"

Tom Pynsent affected ignorance of Lady Kerrison's meaning: he saw Miss Wycherly and Lucy Kerrison cast looks of alarm at Sir Foster, who was winking very rapidly; he saw, also, tears springing to the eyes of his wife—something must be done: he rose hastily.

"Anna Maria, this is a very *English* party, to your little trumpery, new-set taste! Your French Count would have lectured you for sit-

ting so long in one spot. Come, Chyrstal, and Lucy, let us have a round game or a country-dance. Who will play us a country-dance? Pen, rattle the keys for us."

Miss Wycherly was eager to break up the conference, and she played country-dances with great spirit: five couple were therefore soon arranged, and Christobelle was led forth by Charles Spottiswoode. When they reached the termination of the set, Mr. Spottiswoode addressed his partner with an air of mystery, and inquired, in low tones, if she had lately heard of or from Bedinfield. Christobelle could give no satisfactory intelligence. A letter had certainly been received at Wetheral lately, but she had not been made acquainted with its contents. Mr. Spottiswoode's reply was very complimentary to Christobelle: she felt it exquisitely.

"Miss Wetheral, I address you as no common person; and I feel assured a young lady, who has been the companion of Sir John Wetheral, must be prudent beyond her years. Penelope has never received any reply to several letters addressed to Lady Ennismore, and I am anxious to understand the cause. Your sister is not ill, I hope?"

Christobelle was unable to answer even that

simple question; she knew nothing, and had heard nothing with reference to the Ennismores.

"It is very extraordinary!" was Mr. Spottiswoode's quick reply, but nothing more was said, for they were again indefatigably engaged in dancing, till eleven o'clock, when Sir John Wetheral approached his daughter, and advised her to rest till the carriage was announced. As she seated herself, according to his wish, Christobelle heard Mrs. Pynsent speaking to Mrs. Tyndal with some vehemence.

"Upon my word, there will be a dreadful blow-up soon: I went to see Sally Hancock into the pony-carriage, and who should be in the hall but those two people abusing each other. That matchmaking woman has a thousand sins to answer for: she will pay for all this, Jane Tyndal, in the next world!"

Christobelle felt assured the Kerrisons were the party in question. Her eyes sought them, but they were not in either of the drawing-rooms. She turned to Mrs. Pynsent in terror, and inquired for Clara.

"Oh! my dear, they have killed each other by this time, as far as intentions can go. They were fighting in the hall half an hour ago."

Christobelle turned pale with distress, and

Mrs. Pynsent, whose heart was as kind as her manners and address were abrupt, pitied her sufferings. She put her hand gently upon Christobelle's shoulder, and spoke with emphasis.

"*You* can't help it, my poor girl; *you* need not vex yourself: it will all come home to the right person, but that won't be you. Only take care you are not the next sacrifice, and sell yourself for money at people's bidding."

"Oh! Mrs. Pynsent," cried Christobelle, "where is papa?"

"Here, come with me, young lady, and I'll take you to your father. Remember every word in your heart of hearts which *he* utters." Mrs. Pynsent put Christobelle's arm within her own, and continued, as they quitted the room, "Some of her young ones have turned out well, in spite of her. I hope that will tell for her hereafter. Don't fret, now, and make your poor father wish himself at Old Nick: he'll want comfort at Wetheral, and you must comfort him. Here, Sir John, I've brought your good girl to you: don't let her marry in a hurry — ware sheep! There, take her into your care, and hide her for the next seven years."

Sir John Wetheral received his daughter with smiling pleasure, and they proceeded to make their adieus to the remaining company. The

Tom Pynsents were engaged to spend the following day at Wetheral, and Mrs. Pynsent invited herself to accompany them. She had no intention of leaving Tom, just as he was returned from outlandish places. It might disturb the family party at Wetheral, but she liked to watch him enjoying the good roast beef of Old England and home-brewed ale again, and she would follow him to Old Nick, to see him looking so jolly and happy. "Bobby might have Sally Hancock to keep him company; he did not object to her when he was alone."

Sir John Wetheral particularly requested the pleasure of Mr. Pynsent's company to complete the family circle.

"Oh! well, I'll tell him what you say," replied Mrs. Pynsent. "Bobby has been snoring these two hours: he can't bear late hours at all. We shall do very well without him to-morrow, for he only sits licking his lips. Bobby never shone much—but I'll give your message. Sally Hancock will take very good care of him: it's a treat to her, you know."

The Wetherals' farewells were rather lengthy, for they had many friends to hold converse with. Miss Wycherly hovered round them for some time, as if she had some disclosure to make

which required effort. She suddenly caught Sir John's hand as he was quitting the room, and spoke quickly, "Have you heard from Bedinfield lately?"

"Not very lately; why do you appear so anxious, my dear Miss Wycherly?"

"I am very uncomfortable about Julia," she replied: "I have written three letters without receiving any reply. I am sure the Dowager is there; and I am equally sure she separates Julia from her friends. Julia always loved her friends, and there is something wrong when a woman is compelled to drop her old companions. It is not Julia's fault; I'll stake my existence upon Julia's true heart: there is double dealing somewhere, Sir John."

Sir John expressed his intention of visiting Bedinfield the following week, and Christobelle was to accompany him. He would be the bearer of a letter from Miss Wycherly with pleasure. Miss Wycherly's mind was greatly relieved.

"Oh! if you go, Sir John, all will be well. I shall hear the truth from you, and you will find how unchanged dear Julia is. Tell her, from me, that my love and gratitude is unchangeable, and that my home is her home for ever and ever. Tell her I care not for her silence, because it is

not *her* doing; and though we may never more meet, she will be Julia Wetheral, as freshly and fondly my friend, as when she married a man who could not deserve her. Tell her this from me, Sir John."

Miss Wycherly passed on with her lover, and the Wetherals entered their carriage in silence. Sir John sighed heavily, and did not enter into any conversation with his daughter during their drive home: doubtless there was bitterness in his thoughts. Christobelle lost all painful recollections of the emotion caused by Mrs. Pynsent's conversation, in pleasing remembrance of the pleasures of the day. She had enjoyed herself with the pure, unalloyed happiness which attends youth, ere it is pursued by care, and before it endures disappointment. She considered that day as the very happiest portion of her life. She had been kindly and hospitably welcomed by every one, and not a word of reproach or disgust had been levelled at her. Every one seemed delighted to see her eat and dance, to her heart's content. Nothing could surpass the pleasure of that day—nothing had ever equalled it!

Sir John parted with his daughter in the hall. He kissed her, as usual, but his voice was melancholy, and the parting short.

"Good night, my love—I am going to my study."

"Good night, dear papa!"

Sir John turned away, and Christobelle listened to his step, as it echoed through the hall, till he closed the chapel-door behind him. She then retired to her own room, and slept soundly, in spite of anticipations of lectures from her mother upon supposed improprieties committed at Hatton.

CHAPTER XVII.

Lady Wetheral was extremely disconcerted by the knowledge of Mrs. Pynsent's intended visit for the day. The hour of breakfast passed slowly and miserably to Christobelle, who bore the whole burden of her petulance, and gave offence by the silence with which she hoped to dispel her irritability. "She was not at all like her other girls. Clara was warm in her temper, but she had always something sharp or witty to say. Christobelle was the dullest creature she had ever been doomed to sit in company with. Thompson was a great loss, poor dear silly woman; the best creature in the world, and the greatest fool for marrying a man who could not settle something upon her. If Christobelle would have the kindness to inform her how Clara looked, she would be extremely obliged by the information. Perhaps that was

a subject on which she might condescend to speak."

Christobelle told her mother all she had seen and heard; and how fearful she was, that another dispute had arisen between the Kerrisons, which would increase Clara's violence. Lady Wetheral smiled incredulously.

"Clara will soon find herself no match for Sir Foster, and then she must yield by degrees. One or other must domineer, and the battle will be short: Clara will feel compelled to command her temper in time, and all this nonsense will be forgotten. People always forget the faults of the rich. Clara must give a splendid ball when it is blown over. How did Anna Maria appear to like being a guest at Hatton?"

"She was so happy and agreeable."

"She is very unlike her mother, then. I never would visit Wetheral till your father's tiresome old mother died, and Christobelle followed her example. I expect to hear your sister designated 'Mrs. Tom' every where. Country places are so second-rate in their customs! I hope no one will be guilty of such bad taste before *me*."

Christobelle had nothing to bring forward upon any subject which she considered likely to

amuse; and, was, therefore, again silent. Her mother patted the table a few seconds.

"Was Mrs. Hancock at dinner yesterday?"

"Yes, mamma."

"And how did she behave?"

"She was quite silent."

"Mrs. Pynsent is tolerated, because her position in life raises her among the highest of the land; but Mrs. Hancock is unfit for ladies' society:—I was going to say, for female association; but she does not often intrude. Miss Wycherly is a softened likeness of Mrs. Pynsent. There is great insolence in such marked bluntness of manners; one only meets with it in retired country places."

Another long pause.

"Your father talks of visiting Bedinfield next week, and he means to intrude you there. I shall send for poor dear Isabel and her child, I think."

Christobelle was all astonishment. What! summon the Brierly party, whom she always deprecated! Her surprise was visible in her countenance.

"Any thing very extraordinary, Bell, in wishing to see my daughter? I wish you would endeavour to suppress impertinence in your

looks and motions, before you leave home. What are you sitting there for? Pray retire to your occupations."

Christobelle went into her father's study—that sanctum sanctorum for painful feelings, and mortified spirits, and there she remained till the Hatton carriage arrived. She had a long and serious conversation with her kind parent upon many subjects. He spoke most feelingly upon the distress of mind he endured, respecting Clara's conduct and destiny. He had suspected at Hatton that the Kerrisons were not upon speaking terms; and, though Sir Foster was not the man to whom he would commit the care of a daughter, yet he feared that Clara's turbulent disposition increased her own misery, and defied her husband's control. He besought his youthful daughter to pray without ceasing for a mild and teachable spirit, that her future days might not be steeped in misery. He pointed out the worldly and avaricious feelings which had induced Clara to marry; and which he feared would wreck the peace of Lady Ennismore.

Lord Ennismore and Sir Foster Kerrison were selfish men—men who cared for their *own* pleasures, not for the happiness of those who

lived with them. What had Clara reaped from her connexion with the Kerrison family?—Contention and disgust. What had Julia gained by an early removal from her family? He firmly believed she was a victim to the strongly imperious and fascinating Lady Ennismore, who was jealous of any influence over her son's mind, and who would not endure a rival in her power.

Christobelle listened to her father's anxieties in sorrowful silence; young as she was, she had been too long his companion not to have gained some powerful views of the great truths he had ever been anxious to inculcate. She had also been too long his companion not to comprehend and feel for his disquietude. She threw her arms round his neck, and promised to be guided by his counsel in every action of her life; but she besought him not to take blame to himself for Clara's wilful conduct, or Julia's determination to become Lady Ennismore. Her father smiled, but did not combat her prayer. Christobelle was too young to be made the confidante of his feelings — much too young to distinguish the cause of his self-reproach. He could not tell *her* of one whom he deprecated as the cause of Clara's misery; that he was mourning, when too late, the power he had delegated

into unsafe hands. He would not tell her his indulgence to his wife had been treacherously and even wickedly dealt with; that he had given his affections to a worldly being, and that its consequences were now gnawing at his heart.

True, he could turn with pleasure to Anna Maria and Isabel, and behold *them* happy. They had married men of principle — men whom he approved and valued; but who would wipe away the tears from Clara's eyes?—from Julia's once smiling cheeks? Not the Protector, who swore to cherish each young and inexperienced creature at the altar. Not the world, which condemns and punishes its erring and unhappy members, with ruthless pertinacity. They must turn to another and more merciful Judge for pardon and peace; and had they been taught to pray for help in time of need? A father could not unfold all this to the youthful mind of his child; though his melancholy tone and countenance struck her attention, as he spoke to her of earthly and heavenly things. She could not *then* understand the chastening of his mind, but she listened in deep attention to his precepts; and fancied that nothing in this world could have power to attract her from him who loved and cherished her so dearly. To marry,

and quit the study, its quiet, its books, its happy associations! Oh! Lucy Kerrison might wish to leave Ripley, and the family quarrels which broke its rest; but Christobelle felt she could never like a human being, as she honoured and loved her father.

The Pynsents arrived in the highest spirits at Wetheral, and the sight of Anna Maria gave animation to her mother's countenance for a season. She thought her very much improved in looks, and it was not her fault that Anna Maria had not rouged before she married; but Sir John had many prejudices, and that was one of them. Tom Pynsent was delighted.

"Well, I do like to hear every one say my little wife is rouged; it proves how rosy she is grown. All my care, Lady Wetheral, all my care. I let her do as she liked; Biddulph, and Jack Smith, and myself, went after her, and the Count; every where kept her in sight, you know. She talked herself into that pretty rosy face."

"You were not conspicuous, my love, I hope," said her mother, smiling.

"Oh, no; Tom liked me to chat my French, did you not, my love?"

"I liked you to make yourself happy," an-

swered Tom, affectionately. "You made *me* happy, by getting such a nice healthy bloom."

A look of affection, and a pressure of the hand, attested his lady's gratitude and love, though she coloured through her rouge at her husband's remark.

"When we have lunched," continued Tom Pynsent, taking nearly half a pigeon-pie into his plate, "when we have just taken off the edge of hunger, we'll have a ride on horseback, Anny, and go over the old ground again. You must have an old habit here, somewhere; let us go and see our old love haunts."

Anna Maria was nothing loth; her matrimony was of only four or five months' standing, and they were lovers still. She was quite willing to take an agreeable ride with her dear Tom.

"Let us have the young one, too," exclaimed the good-natured Tom Pynsent; "habits and horses for two, and you shall see the world, missy."

"I shall want Bell," said Lady Wetheral, annoyed at the idea of a *tête-à-tête* with Mrs. Pynsent.

"Ay, Miss Bell, stay with us, I shall want a casting vote, and I shall want you to introduce me to Sir John's study," cried Mrs. Pynsent,

giving Christobelle a thump upon her shoulder. "I must become acquainted with you, young lady."

Lady Wetheral's possession of manner concealed the disgust she endured at this movement. She turned to her eldest daughter, and inquired at what hour she would wish her horse equipped.

"Oh, my poor Lady Mary, let her be saddled at three, if you please. I think three o'clock, Tom, will do."

"Lord, Mrs. Tom, you will be as hot as fire, riding in the blazing sun," exclaimed Mrs. Pynsent.

"Perhaps Mrs. *Tom Pynsent* would prefer her ride at four o'clock," observed Lady Wetheral.

"My daughter, Tom, will melt away," replied Mrs. Pynsent, giving her a touch with the elbow. "Suppose your pretty face melts, eh, Mrs. Tom? That would be a pretty confession, wouldn't it?"

"At what hour, Mrs. Pynsent?" demanded her mother, addressing Anna Maria, and taking no notice of Mrs. Pynsent, the elder.

"Say four, then, at once," continued Mrs. Pynsent, "and don't confound mother and

daughter; I am Pen Pynsent, and that is my daughter, Tom — Mrs. Tom, till I am underground, and out of the way."

Lady Wetheral bowed with much suavity and politeness to her unrefined companion. "She had great pleasure in acknowledging her daughter Mrs. Tom Pynsent, the wife of an excellent and honourable man, standing high in the county."

"To be sure — and very happy to get him. Every girl can't marry such a tight lad as Tom; as good a son as ever comforted a mother's eyes. He's none of your pimmeny fellows, like I know who; or a ranting, violent husband, like Foster Kerrison. He's good, downright Tom; and Mrs. Tom may look the best of them in the face."

Tom Pynsent winked at his lady, and continued paying his *devoirs* to the pigeon-pie. Lady Wetheral could never argue with Mrs. Pynsent, and a short silence ensued. Mrs. Pynsent's forcible mode of expressing her ideas, and her perfectly opposite views upon every subject, prevented all hope of coalition with Lady Wetheral, who could not endure abruptness, or what the world denominated "a good, downright person." Her education in high life did not enable her to shape her sentiments and actions to the tone of country society, so far removed from the atmosphere of courtly phrases;

and of all her acquaintance, Mrs. Pynsent was the least suited to her tastes. She disliked "truth-telling," disagreeable people; she deprecated people who "spoke their mind" upon every point, and at all times; in short, Mrs. Pynsent was never to be endured but as the mother of Tom; and now he was secured, nothing could be more intolerable than her presence.

Mrs. Pynsent took up her workbag after luncheon, and sat down to knot. Lady Wetheral politely stationed herself near her guest, and appeared occupied with her worstedwork. Anna Maria looked over Christobelle as she was busied copying a drawing for her father; and Tom Pynsent was gone to sit an hour with him in the study, and talk of Paris, till the riding-horses should make their appearance. Mrs. Tom Pynsent complimented her sister upon her first essays in landscape-painting, and prognosticated she would be the only accomplished Miss Wetheral of the family. Her mother smiled upon her.

"I may certainly confess you are the 'beautiful,' my dear Anna Maria. I quite congratulate you upon the addition of a little rouge."

"I'm sure I would never congratulate a daughter upon her painted face," exclaimed Mrs. Pynsent; "a woman with her cheeks raddled, is like the poor things in the street."

Anna Maria blushed, but in perfect good humour with her mother-in-law. She answered the remark with a confession of its propriety, and expressed her wish it should not be made known to her husband that she *did* employ art in improving her complexion.

"I was very foolish to rouge at all, because Tom did not like the idea of it; but the Count de Nolis pressed it so much as a material improvement to a lady who was naturally pale, that I tried a very little gradually; and poor dear Tom had such pleasure in fancying I was becoming blooming, that I never could bear to disappoint him. I assure you it was only to please Tom."

Mrs. Pynsent was appeased at once by this candid confession: any thing which bore a meaning, or shew of affection towards her son, won her instant assent. She was satisfied the motive was good, and she upheld her daughter-in-law from that hour in deceiving her husband. But there was a reservation in her approval.

"It's a nasty trick, Mrs. Tom, and a bad trick; but if you love your husband, and wish to please his eye—God help me!—I have nothing to say. Whoever loves Tom, has my heart and good-will. But leave it off as soon as you can."

"It is very becoming," observed Lady Wetheral, "and it is done in all the highly fashionable circles."

"Yes, it's *done*, my Lady Wetheral, and so are many abominable practices. Your high ladies do gamble, and they do intrigue, my Lady Wetheral; but you would not approve your daughter's fashionable turn, I hope, in that line."

Her ladyship disliked "home thrusts" also, in her catalogue of country annoyances. She made no reply to Mrs. Pynsent's remark, but coolly inquired of Anna Maria when Miss Wycherly's marriage was likely to take place.

"Oh! I am most likely to know my niece's affairs," resumed Mrs. Pynsent; "my daughter, Tom, can't explain Pen's intentions. Bill Wycherly gives up Lidham to the young couple."

"A very excellent resolution," observed Lady Wetheral, with emphasis.

"I don't think so, at all. Bill should keep the staff in his own hand: I'm very angry with him. Let the young wait for the old, is my maxim."

"The old, perhaps, are more fitted for retirement," drily remarked Lady Wetheral.

"They are fitter to be called fools who re-

nounce their birthright," retorted Mrs. Pynsent, "and so I told Bobby when he offered Hatton to Tom. My son knew better than to accept it. Tom never forgets his duty, and his wife may say her prayers for having caught him."

"I should feel inclined to soften that expression," observed Lady Wetheral, in her gentlest accents; "the idea of catching a young man is not a pleasing figure of speech."

Mrs. Pynsent gave a short, loud laugh. "Why, my Lady Wetheral, we won't stand upon words; I express my knowledge of facts in few round-about phrases. I say what I think, and I can't help the cap fitting too tight to be agreeable."

Anna Maria beheld the disgust of Lady Wetheral's mind expressed upon her lowering brow. A slight frown was the only public token of distaste which was ever allowed to transpire: her ladyship never rebutted, never argued. It was, she averred, an indisputable sign of ill-breeding, wretched taste, and bad temper. She frowned, and her daughter knew its purport. It was impossible to leave two such ill-assorted companions together; the undisguised sentiments of Mrs. Pynsent, uttered with masculine energy of manner and voice, would overpower her conscious yet refined companion — perhaps cause a

nervous attack, and originate an illness. Mrs. Tom Pynsent relinquished all intention of riding with her husband. Her presence might check her mother-in-law's vivacity; it would certainly give pleasure to her mother, and it must be a satisfaction to Christobelle. Mrs. Pynsent's good nature even turned her daughter-in-law's expressed intention to Christobelle's advantage.

"Very good move, Mrs. Tom — very good move. You and myself are old women, as it were; we will sit here chatting to my Lady Wetheral, but let every one have their turn. Tom will ride with poor Miss Bell, and amuse her: the poor thing is cooped up to death here."

"My daughter Bell has every advantage. I rather think my daughter considers her mother's society sufficiently agreeable," said Lady Wetheral, bending politely but haughtily to her guest.

"Considers a fiddlestick, my Lady Wetheral!" replied Mrs. Pynsent, knotting with great energy. "What young girl considers herself agreeable with no playfellows, and a hipped Lady-mother? No, no; air, my lady—exercise, my lady—companions, my lady: *that* is poor Miss Bell's proper entertainment. Tom will ride with her, poor thing!"

Lady Wetheral did not condescend to reply to this sally. However lowly Christobelle stood in her eyes, however petulant she might be to the "stupid, awkward girl *herself*," "poor thing!" sounded most offensively to her ear. Anna Maria again interfered by ringing the bell, and begging that Mr. Tom Pynsent might be summoned from the library. Tom's presence, she knew, was always desirable every where; but his mother's attention would be riveted upon her son, and Lady Wetheral would escape the inevitable contention which followed her own remarks. This was the first time the ladies had ever been placed a whole morning in juxtaposition. Anna Maria was sure the visit would never take place again. Each party would decline a second day of family intercourse.

Tom Pynsent's entrance with Sir John effected a change in every one's situation. Christobelle was to ride; Mrs. Pynsent decided upon that measure, and her father enforced it. He was then to do the honours of the conservatory and gardens to his guest, while the mother and daughter worked and conversed *tête-à-tête*. So far, all was prudently arranged, and promised peace.

Christobelle was enchanted with her ride. Tom Pynsent did not possess conversational

powers, but his want of talent was more than balanced by invincible good-nature, and manly courage of body and mind. Christobelle loved him for his kind heart and anxious wish to make every body happy; and she loved him for the devotion he expressed for Anna Maria at all times, and in all places. It was not an uxurious affection, effeminate, and annoying to witness. Tom Pynsent loved with his whole heart the woman who possessed his name, and was to share his fortunes. He loved her with a manly tenderness, which displayed itself in a thousand forms, and raised him in public estimation by its amalgamation with his very existence. It connected his wife with the stable and the kennel; it connected her with all his amusements. She was part and parcel of every thing in which he was concerned. What a man had Julia thrown from herself, ere he discovered Anna Maria's love and sufferings!

Tom Pynsent shewed Christobelle, with infinite satisfaction, the spots most consecrated to memory, as the scenes of Anna Maria's confessions. He seemed to linger with pleasure in the lane where his wife first disclosed her long-concealed misery, and where he had dismounted to impress a thousand kisses upon her hand.

His tone changed, as he recapitulated his astonishment and delight.

"By Jove, when I think of all this, I could never bear to ride here, if any thing happened to my little wife; but I hope not—I hope she will see me into my grave, and be comfortable with you all. She would do very well without me, but I couldn't exist without her. I should let Kerrison have the kennel then, and take the shoes off the hunters. By Jove, they might turn out for life, then."

Christobelle listened to her brother's remarks with great interest; she could not understand the deep affection of his heart at that time, but she was sensible to the compliment of being the depository of his thoughts. She was delighted with his notice and attention; and particularly felt its pleasing influence, because her mother undervalued and reproached her daily and hourly at Wetheral. She was very sorry when their ride was brought to a close, and she again returned to her apartment to dress for dinner.

Anna Maria joined her sister; her hair was forced into immense curls, by her French attendant, Félicé, and her ringlets were frizzed into bows. Félicé followed her mistress in green

silk. Such a novelty was rare and alarming in Shropshire; they had heard of the allied sovereigns being at that moment in London, but nothing approaching to a foreigner had yet appeared at Shrewsbury. Félicé was a creature to be stared at, and Anna Maria would become most formidably fashionable when once the knowledge of her arrival should transpire. Anna Maria said, "she had brought her maid to friz Christobelle's very English head of hair into something like effect. She bade her look in the glass, and smile at her hair, combed straight in front, and just turned up at the back. It was something that would horrify De Nolis in the autumn. She must positively have it dressed properly."

"See now, Félicé; Miss Wetheral's hair must be dressed this way."

"*Comme-ça, madame,*" repeated the smiling pretty Félicé.

"Yes, *comme-ça:* friz this dreadful crop into curls, *boucles*, Félicé—*grand boucles*, like mine. *Donnez mademoiselle un* very nice *tournure*, and let her be *très bien mise.* You may laugh, Bell, but I assure you a Parisian perfectly understands what you mean, if you only use the

words '*coiffure*,' '*parure*,' or '*tournure*;' they fill up the rest of the sentence intuitively."

Christobelle submitted to the torture of the comb and curling-irons with great satisfaction. Whatever was fashionable in Paris, must be admired and envied in England, and her mother would be pleased to see her decorated by the hand of approved good-taste.

The hair was not the "*ultima thule*" of Félicé's care. A "*bustle*" was appended to Christobelle's waist, and the folds of her muslin frock were drawn over it with the nicest care; her dress was dragged down to give a lengthened appearance to the waist, and the band tightened till she could hardly breathe. Mrs. Tom Pynsent and her "*artiste*" were charmed with the result of their exertions. Félicé spoke a long sentence, which Christobelle translated to her sister, whose knowledge of the language was not at all improved by four months' residence in Paris. It was a well-turned compliment upon the change in the young lady's appearance. Anna Maria regretted that their education had been so little attended to by Lady Wetheral.

"Papa has taught you so many accomplishments, Bell! You draw, and you speak French and quote delightfully, Charles Spottiswood

says. You have had many advantages over us. The Count de Nolis said I was rapidly improving in French, and he advised me to return to Paris soon, to learn the accent; but I cannot speak it half so fluently as you do. I wonder what mamma will say to your head? I think it perfect."

Their appearance certainly made a sensation in the drawing-room, for Lady Wetheral raised her glass with a surprised and satisfied expression of countenance, and examined Christobelle very attentively. Mrs. Pynsent caught a glance of her head, curled, frizzed, and bowed in all directions; and she exclaimed, "Hollo, there! why, Miss Bell, what's the matter now? they have made a dancing-dog of you!"

"You have done a very kind action by your sister, my dear Mrs. Tom Pynsent," said Lady Wetheral, still gazing at Christobelle through her glass; "you have quite christianized her style and appearance."

"Ha, ha!" laughed Mrs. Pynsent, "poor Miss Bell! Well, now they *have* done it. Curly-headed christians for ever, Mrs. Tom! Who are you going to baptize next?"

"But does not Bell become her baptism?" asked Anna Maria, smiling.

"She is always a pretty girl; and, what is far better, she is a good and kind-hearted girl; but I don't like your French fashions."

"Pray, Bell, let your hair be attended to in future," said Lady Wetheral, still holding her glass to her eye. "I approve of your present appearance. I cannot endure your thick, short hair hanging over your eyes."

"By far the most natural, at her age," observed Mrs. Pynsent; "a young girl dressed up that figure, is very unnatural and ridiculous."

Lady Wetheral did not reply. Tom Pynsent was much amused at the transformation, when he entered the room. He bantered Christobelle, with great good-humour, upon the havoc she would cause among the hearts of the schoolboys, the very next vacation, if she persisted in twisting her hair into sausages; and he pitied poor Frank Kerrison, who would certainly renounce murdering cockchafers, to write verses upon her beauty. Sir John smiled, and stroked his daughter's cheek, but he offered no comment upon her person. The circumstance was almost too trifling to amuse even the dull half hour before dinner. A whim of Mrs. Tom Pynsent had led her to dress her sister's hair; and its end was answered, by causing a few smiles and a jest. The inci-

dent passed away, and was forgotten in the summons to dinner; but that very trifling occurrence laid the foundation of much future misery:—it woke up Lady Wetheral's slumbering energies, and led her to speculate upon the establishment of a creature whom she had, till that moment, renounced as awkward and vulgar—a girl belonging exclusively to her father—whose futurity was indifferent to herself. Causes, however trifling in their origin, swell into fearful effects, under the agency of the weak or wicked.

When the ladies returned into the drawing-room, Anna Maria and Christobelle enjoyed a short *téte-à-téte* during their mother's *siesta*. Anna Maria said it would be impossible to hope for pleasant intercourse between the houses of Pynsent and Wetheral. The two ladies had not agreed in one sentiment upon any subject during Christobelle's absence, and each appeared irritated and wearied. It was altogether abrupt truth on one side, and haughty silence on the part of her mother: she was very certain there would be no pleasant result from this day's occurrences. Her two relations had never before passed a day together, dependent upon each other's society; and it had only taught them how impossible it would be to meet again upon

those terms. She would tell Tom her thoughts as soon as they arrived at Hatton—Tom could manage every thing—she did not believe any body could resist Tom's pleasing way of arranging things: perhaps Tom would entreat his mother not to contradict Lady Wetheral so very flatly.

This was distressing intelligence: if Lady Wetheral felt disturbed by Mrs. Pynsent's peculiar style of manners, there would be an end at once to Christobelle's happy prospects; she was becoming jealous of her daughter's society, though she professed indifference; and she could see little of her sister's company, if Mrs. Pynsent was necessarily included in the invitation, which welcomed the Tom Pynsents, at all times, to the now dull halls of Wetheral Castle. Lady Wetheral's offended taste was a mental wound which never closed. She was not harsh towards vice—it might redeem itself; but rudeness of manner, or a vulgar phraseology, was beyond the limits of pardon. In both particulars did Mrs. Pynsent certainly transgress; and her ladyship's remarks, after their departure, betokened her disgust and aversion to the society of her departed guest.

"I shall feel obliged, Bell, by your silence

upon the events of this disgusting day. Let me forget, if possible, that I have been, for eight hours, the companion of stentorian coarseness and vulgarity. I must regret seeing your sister but seldom, as I apprehend I shall do. I cannot be upon terms with a woman who designates her son's lady 'Mrs. Tom:' now ring, if you please, for my *sal volatile*."

The next day's post brought a letter from Mrs. Boscawen: its contents were most cheering. "She was very anxious Christobelle should know how beautiful her darling babe was growing, and that it had outgrown its first pinafores. Boscawen was quite as fond of the darling as she could possibly be herself, and Christobelle would be amused by seeing him nurse it to sleep, while she tamboured its little frock. Miss Tabitha was gone to stay a few weeks at Worcester, with Mrs. Ward, and there was no one now at Brierly to alarm her with heat, and cold, with drinking too little, or eating too much. She was perfectly happy with her dear Boscawen, nursing and laughing all day long—no books—no lectures. Oh, if Chrystal could but see her *now!*"

A postscript, in Mr. Boscawen's hand-writing, was equally valuable, and gave deep satisfaction to Sir John Wetheral. These were his words:—

mother, as happy as mortality will
poor human nature can enjoy.

"Yours faithful

"C. Bosc

It was grateful happiness to Sir
theral, to reflect upon the destiny
Boscawen's age was an unpromis
ing to the fortunes of a young cr
tached to juvenile pleasures, and ave
restraints of tuition: but Sir John j
the high principles of the man to whom
commit the welfare of his child, wo
safeguard of her happiness. The atm
Wetheral was unfavourable to ment
At Brierly, the society of her husb
enrich Isabel's mind with stores fro
deep resources; and her heart woul

nually increasing solicitude, which would not dissolve again. Anna Maria was happy, also, with her honest and affectionate Tom Pynsent; but what was to be the hope of Clara? — clouds and darkness rested upon it.

Christobelle was now to prepare for her visit to Bedinfield. She wondered at the sudden intention, on her father's part, to go uninvited to Lord Ennismore; but she was not a party to the events—if such there were—which gave rise to the meditated visit. Christobelle's youth precluded her from entering into the consultations, or bearing a part in the correspondence, of her father: she could only guess all was not right, when he spoke of Bedinfield, because his smile fled, and his expression became melancholy; but she was an utter stranger to its cause. She was perfectly content to know she was preparing to visit Julia, and to travel with her father. Her mother spoke very seriously to her the evening before they quitted Wetheral.

"Bell, you will have Taylor to attend you at Bedinfield. I admire Miss Willis's taste in your dresses: she is unrivalled in her selections, and your figure is considerably improved since Félicé has given you a few general instructions. The long waist is extremely becoming to you. Your

hair gives quite a changed expression to your whole person now, Bell."

"I am very glad, mamma, you approve of it."

"I do, very much: I have some hopes you will equal your sisters in appearance. If you persevere in attending to your hair, which is such a graceful ornament to a woman, I shall have some pride in your well-doing. I never looked at you before, Bell, you were such a dowdy-looking creature. Walk across the room—head up, Bell: really, that dress is very becoming."

Christobelle walked several times up and down the boudoir, to allow her mother to complete her observations. She was to throw her head gracefully back—she was to curtesy, as if in the act of receiving company—she was bid to come forward and offer a fan, with an air of easy composure. She performed many disagreeable, but extremely necessary, evolutions, to give her mother satisfaction; and, unfortunately, her dress, and her eagerness to bring the lesson to an end, assisted her success. She was decided a creature not destitute of a certain air, and, as Landscape Brown would word it, there was "great capability," with severe pruning, and much persevering determination, to shine. If Christobelle made good use of the three following years, her

mother did not despair of matching her even higher than Lady Ennismore. "A very Frenchy style of dress and walk would prove a great novelty, and attract gentlemen who always approved the novelties they failed to admire. She would cause a sensation, and some contention in opinion, which would inevitably make her the highest fashion in Shropshire."

This was an unlooked-for change in the politics of Wetheral. Little did Christobelle think Félicé's hand would have wrought such evil to an unsuspecting, unspeculative creature as herself. Little did she dream, under her tasteful assistance, to spring, at a bound, from the "awkward, dull Bell — Sir John's tiresome, learned daughter," into an object of speculation, which would again waken her mother's powers into action, to draw her from happy tranquillity, into scenes of distracting contention. She was glad to think the Bedinfield visit stood between her and a second lesson upon graceful movements. She could not dive into the future, or draw conclusions from the present, at this moment: she rejoiced only to escape lectures upon style, and reprimands for acting upon impulse. Christobelle hoped to find freedom and happy enjoyment at Bedinfield, and that pleasing thought

gave her spirits to endure her mother's unceasing efforts to arouse "a proper vanity" in her mind, and make her look forward to a ducal, or, at least, the coronet of a marquis.

"Bell, you shall certainly be emancipated from the seclusion of Wetheral, and receive the first advantages which a dancing-master can give. I will endeavour to persuade your poor father to give us a spring or two in London, or a trip to Paris. Paris I should approve most. Félicé has quite delighted me with her tasteful fancy."

"I prefer Wetheral, mamma, and my pleasant readings with papa in the library, if you please."

"Young ladies are not the soundest judges upon their own case," replied her mother, drily; "they may prefer indolence to activity: and, for a season, they may be blind to their own defects; but they will take care, in the end, to throw the consequences of their folly upon their parents, as Clara did. She forgot her own very insupportable violence of temper; and her endeavour to blame me as the cause of her high position, as Lady Kerrison, was improper. *I* find my daughters establishments, but I look to *them* to fill that situation with propriety."

"Sir Foster is very violent to all his people,

mamma," Christobelle observed, hoping to shield Clara from remark.

"Your sister knew that, Bell: every body knew Sir Foster was a dull brute. She should never have entered into collision with him. If he kicked his servants, he was not likely to strike his wife without provocation. Clara is extremely provoking."

It was true, indeed. Lady Kerrison did act most unadvisedly in rousing a turbulent nature, when it was actually at rest: but who pointed her attention to the match, and softened down every report which bruited Sir Foster's violence to the neighbourhood? Surely, Lucy Kerrison's remarks upon her father's temper was a beacon to parents, to avoid the domestic quicksands of Ripley—yet Christobelle was present, and heard her mother vindicate Sir Foster's treatment of the fishmonger, and urge the elegibility of the connection. Lady Wetheral continued:—

"I am not at all pleased with the junior Pynsents being guests in the country—Mrs. Pynsent will follow them every where, and quote 'Mrs. Tom' to her friends. I cannot say that match has been productive of pleasure to me. Lady Ennismore, the dowager, has been offensive in her conduct, by presuming to close her son's

house to his friends. Bedinfield is no pleasant refuge for *me*, I can see. I can never witness Clara's quarrels—and Brierly is so secluded, besides Isabel having the child always with her, that I have no satisfaction in *that* quarter. What comfort have I in my girls' marriages? You must make up to me for these sad disappointments, Bell. You shall marry Lord Selgrave, when you are both introduced into life."

"Lord Selgrave, mamma! I never saw him in my life."

"So much the better: the introduction rests with me. Lord Farnborough will not leave Shropshire, and Selgrave, the boy, will be amongst us. Farnborough Stacey will be the favourite residence, even when he becomes Duke of Forfar. You shall be Lady Selgrave, Bell, the future Duchess of Forfar: does not that title raise your little vanity, and produce ambitious wishes?"

"No, indeed, mamma, I would rather be comfortable in the library, reading to papa."

"If there is any thing I detest," exclaimed Lady Wetheral, with great asperity, "it is a slothful and mean mind, content to grovel in lowliness—untouched by ambition — crouching in dullness, and blind to prosperity. Leave my

presence, Bell. Go to your chamber, and let me see you no more."

Christobelle prepared to obey the harsh injunction. She lighted her taper, and turned to utter "good-night." Her mother waved her hand.

"Say nothing. I do not choose to be disturbed to-morrow by your appearance. I have no regard for blind obstinacy—pass on in silence, if you please."

Christobelle quitted the boudoir in tears. Why was her early life to be embittered with reproaches concerning those things which might never take place? and why was her mind to be tortured into projects which could not affect her heart, or her time of life? She rushed to her father's study, and threw herself into his arms, weeping. He was surprised at the movement, and still more so at her words: — "Oh, papa, don't let me be obliged to marry. Don't make me think of Lord Selgrave; for I never saw him, and I cannot marry him."

"My dear Chrystal," he exclaimed, in astonishment, "I cannot understand you."

Christobelle explained to him her mother's wishes, and her anger at her disclaiming matrimony with Lord Selgrave. He smiled.

"This is sad folly, my dear child; I ought not to allow myself to feel entertained at your alarm, for I see the pernicious effects of education extending to yourself: but do not weep, Chrystal. No one shall take you from me, without your consent."

"I may always live with you, papa, and stay at Wetheral?" she asked, as the tears coursed down her cheeks.

"You shall never quit me till you say, 'Papa, I wish to leave you for the home of another.'"

"And that will never, never be, my own dear papa!" Christobelle embraced him with joyous gratitude, and smiled through her tears.

"Then be happy, my child, and think no more of little Lord Selgrave. You, at least, shall not reproach me hereafter with weakness of character. Go and sleep sweetly, and prepare for to-morrow's journey."

Christobelle received her father's blessing, and her heart was no longer sorrowful. He would watch over and protect her! She would not be driven to marry Lord Selgrave, and renounce her peaceful station by his side. She could live with him, and read to him for ever! She became calm, and her mother's angry glances faded from her recollection. Christobelle retired to her slumbers in peace, that night.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Bedinfield appeared a kingly residence. The mansion stood before the traveller's gaze, with its towers and battlements, grand and imposing to the view. Had Lady Wetheral accompanied her husband, she would have decided that happiness must reign uncontrolled in that most stately dwelling. There was grandeur and repose in the scene, as they advanced to the massive pile of building; and there was stately ceremony enforced, when they arrived at its portals.

It was seven by the chapel clock, when Sir John Wetheral and his daughter entered the hall of Bedinfield, and a train of footmen in gorgeous livery bandied their names, till they were ushered into a vast apartment, richly carved in oak. It was untenanted: there was a vase of rare exotics upon a small silver table, which some hand

had apparently quitted in haste, for some of the flowers had fallen upon the Persian carpet, and their stalks were wet and freshly gathered. Christobelle's young ideas had considered Wetheral Castle the criterion of elegance, and her eager curiosity examined with surprise the magnificent decoration around. The superb silver tables—the costly cabinets—the whole style of grand simplicity delighted her taste, and astonished her mind. She turned to her father with feelings of ecstasy.

"Can there be any thing more grand than this, papa? Can any place be more superbly beautiful? Oh, look at that lovely cabinet—that row of cabinets—and those paintings! How happy Julia must be!"

"Does all this create happiness, Chrystal?"

"Oh no, that was a wrong word—but how *pleased* Julia must be, looking at these things, and thinking they are her own! But why does not Julia come to us, papa? Did not she expect us to-day?"

Sir John paused, as he was accompanying Christobelle in her passage up the apartment, and he addressed her with seriousness.

"Chrystal, make no observations of any kind, and ask no questions of me, or of Julia. I ex-

pect great prudence from you. You are now my companion and friend, and you must learn to veil much surprise, by silence. Be very prudent, my child, and remark nothing to your sister."

"I will be very prudent, papa," answered Christobelle, in a whisper. The vastness of the room, and the mystery expressed in her father's words, struck her with awe. She already felt as though silence must reign with so much grandeur, and that liberty of speech dwelt not in lofty apartments. She continued silently examining a portrait of extreme beauty, which she was aware represented the Dowager Lady Ennismore, in her youth. It still retained a considerable degree of likeness—the eye could never change—its extraordinary expression was there—and the haughty look, subdued by the collision of high society, was admirably expressed in the painting. Christobelle was irresistibly attracted by the portrait, and she gazed upon it till a door opened near her, and roused her attention. A female attendant approached. She was a tall, stately person, attired with peculiar neatness and precision. She brought Lady Ennismore's compliments of welcome. Her ladyship invited her guests to retire to their apart-

ments. She would have the pleasure of meeting them in the drawing-room when the great bell pealed, and after her guests had refreshed themselves by changing their attire.

Sir John Wetheral advanced, slightly bowing to the stately messenger.

"I believe I address an attendant of Lady Ennismore?"

"I have the honour to attend the Dowager Countess of Ennismore," was the reply.

"Your message is from Lady Ennismore, my daughter, is it not?" observed Sir John, anxiously.

"My message is from the Dowager Countess," replied her attendant.

"Lady Ennismore is probably from home?"

"The young Lady Ennismore is in her dressing-room," was the answer. "I am deputed to attend Miss Wetheral to her apartment."

This was extraordinary. Was not Bedinfield the property of Julia and her lord? Yet the message of compliment was tendered by the Countess Dowager, as if she still presided over the mind and estate of her son. There was something gravely suspicious in this coldly polite reception, which disturbed the father's heart. Christobelle begged to know if her room was situated

near her father's bedchamber, and she turned to him with a look of earnest alarm. He smiled.

"Miss Wetheral feels a little nervous among strangers; may I inquire if the rooms destined for us are near each other?"

"They are near," was the laconic reply, and Christobelle prepared to depart. A servant entering at the moment, to offer his services to Sir John, they proceeded together to the great gallery, into which their apartments opened. The stately female pointed to a heavily-carved oak-door, as she preceded Christobelle. "Sir John Wetheral sleeps in the crimson chamber." She then threw open the door of a large gloomy room appropriated to Christobelle. "Yours, Miss Wetheral, is the tapestried chamber." She then curtseyed and withdrew.

Taylor was in a dressing-room adjoining, laying out her young lady's wardrobe, and Christobelle surveyed the horrors of the tapestried chamber, which she was sure would in itself disturb her slumbers. The "Murder of the Innocents" stood in enormous proportions at the bottom of the room facing her bed, which was decorated with sable plumes round its summit. The brawny arms of the soldiery seizing the young children, their dreadful eyes, and the

weapons they brandished over the heads of the hapless babes, took effect upon her imagination, and terrified her. Christobelle was quite sure the glare of the high wax-lights, when she retired for the night, would raise them into living bodies, that would "live, and move, and have their being," to her extremity of terror. The deep recesses, the dark oak furniture—all and each combined to render the room terrible. She would have given worlds to be at that moment even in the boudoir at Wetheral.

Sir John tapped at his daughter's door, as he prepared to descend to the drawing-room: Christobelle was dressed, and ready to accompany him. She begged him to see her safely to her room-door every night, and confessed her alarm at the idea of passing so many hours in a place so full of horrors. If he could only see the horrid objects which glared round the walls of her room, he would not wonder at her disquietude!

Sir John endeavoured to reason Christobelle into calmness, and he inquired why her rest should be disturbed by pictorial representations of Scripture history. Was not the hand of her Maker as mercifully stretched forth to uphold her among gobelin tapestry, as in the paper

hangings of Wetheral? Christobelle acknowledged it was so. She was silenced; she did not offer any defence for her alarms, but she could not suppress them. That chamber would never be her "sleeping" apartment. She should never be able to close her eyes.

A servant was in waiting to announce them, as they descended into the hall. The folding-doors were thrown open, their names were called over with proper emphasis, and they found themselves in the presence of Lord and Lady Ennismore, and the Countess-dowager. The latter rose, and advanced with her usual suavity. She took both Sir John's hands in hers.

"My dear Sir John, this is a real and unexpected honour. I am delighted to see you. Miss Wetheral, you are welcome: Julia is anxious, I see, to appropriate you—fly to her, my love. We are a small family-party, you see, Sir John Wetheral; but we shall endeavour to amuse you at Bedinfield. Lady Wetheral is well, I hope."

Sir John replied in courteous terms, that his lady was in health.

"I hope you will find our dear Julia well, and as handsome as ever. Our Staffordshire air is excellent, and Julia's bloom is, I think, in-

creased. Julia, I must not monopolise your father. It would not be just, so I resign him with reluctance."

The Dowager led Sir John towards the young Lady Ennismore, who received him with almost wild fondness. Lord Ennismore also came forward.

"I have much pleasure in bidding you welcome, Sir John Wetheral, as also yourself, Miss Wetheral. I hope I see you both in good health."

Lord Ennismore bowed low, and resumed his seat. The Dowager Lady Ennismore spoke for her son.

"My dear Ennismore feels with me the honour and pleasure of this unexpected visit. I have much to show Sir John, now that he has favoured us with his company. I shall do the honours of the Park to him, with great pleasure, and request his opinion upon our new lodge."

"You will doubtless, my dear mother, show our guest, Sir John, the new line of road through the plantations."

"My dear Ennismore, our very first drive will be through the plantations. I am proud to exhibit your taste; it will always hold its place in my mind, as our lion of Bedinfield."

"It was not my suggestion, my dear mother," replied the poor, dull-looking Lord Ennismore.

"My dear son, you approved of my idea, which makes it your own affair. The new drive is certainly an affair of your own carrying out. I had little to do with it. The architect, you know, is secondary. The filling up requires knowledge and taste: that was your part, dear Augustus."

A smile of satisfaction stole over the pallid face of Lord Ennismore, but it could not light up the leaden expression of his eyes, as they rested upon his mother's face.

"I am glad you think highly of that road, my dear mother."

"I think it the finest work upon the estate, my dear son. I was trying to inoculate Julia with my enthusiastic delight, yesterday."

"Julia does not admire it as you do," observed Lord Ennismore, rising from the chair near his lady, and taking a seat by his mother.

"We are not all granted the same tastes," replied her ladyship. "Bedinfield has been my home many years, and you, my dear Augustus, were born here. It must be a cherished place to my heart."

"I hope it will be always your home."

Lord Ennismore took his mother's hand, and held it in his, till dinner was announced.

Julia did not hear the conversation which took place between Lord Ennismore and her mother-in-law, neither did she observe her lord's change of situation: she was learning the news of Wetheral from her father's lips, and her whole attention was fixed upon him, and the communications which deeply touched her heart. Christobelle heard her complain of the silence of all her friends: she dwelt with energy upon the silence of Miss Wycherly, and mourned to think how slightly her friendship had stood the trial of a few months' absence. She had invited Penelope to visit Bedinfield, but even politeness had not elicited an answer from Lidham. She felt very keenly the conduct of her early friends, but Lady Ennismore had warned her seriously that such would be the case, and her kindness was Julia's greatest consolation.

"Have you not *once* heard from Penelope?" asked her father, speaking low.

"I have never received a letter from Shropshire since I married, papa." Julia's eyes filled with tears at the thought of estranged affections.

"Penelope charged me with many messages,

Julia. She desired me to say that, absent or silent, her heart was unchanged, and Lidham was your home, equally with Bedinfield and Wetheral."

"Dear Penelope!" exclaimed Julia, with clasped hands, "I was loth to think she loved me less; but her happy lot should not make her silent to her old friend!"

Julia's movement attracted the attention of the Dowager. She addressed herself again to Sir John.

"My dear Sir John, what do you think of Staffordshire scenery? We do not relinquish the palm of beauty to any county in the southern part of Great Britain. Tell me exactly your route."

Sir John gave a concise statement of their little journey, which was commented upon by her ladyship with vivacity. She entered into descriptions of Staffordshire scenery, and the Staffordshire aristocracy, with increasing energy, keeping all attention engaged towards herself, and allowing no respite for recommencing a conversation with Julia. Lady Ennismore chatted even through the immense hall, and to the very dinner-table. Christobelle also watched the elder Lady Ennismore with uncontrollable sur-

prise take her seat at the head of the table, while Julia quietly placed herself at her father's side. Christobelle looked at her father, to observe his movements; she did not meet his eye; his expression of countenance and manner was very grave, but he gave no evidence of having noticed the circumstance: he was conversing with Julia upon the arrival of the Tom Pynsents.

The dinner passed in solemn grandeur. The party was too limited for general conversation, and the presence of many servants checked all approach to remarks beyond commonplace allusion to the weather and climate of Staffordshire. Christobelle admired the simplicity of the apartment, in its magnificent proportions and grand style of architecture, but she was glad when the meal concluded, and the servants were withdrawn.

The Dowager Lady Ennismore was then seen to great advantage: Christobelle could not help admiring the perfection of manners which rendered her so fascinating to every one with whom she came in contact. In spite of Julia's position, so decidedly a position of disadvantage to herself, and improper, as the wife of Lord Ennismore—in the very face of that impropriety, in spite of dislike to Lady Ennismore, as the

cause of Julia's present situation, Christobelle beheld her with a powerful admiration. She was attracted by that refined attention, that power of pleasing, so delicate, so full of tact, accompanied by great personal beauty, which takes the senses captive, even while we struggle against its power. She admired the witchery of her eyes, as she glanced upon each person those captivating and flattering meanings, which few minds could resist: and she was, beyond expression, charmed by the attentions which were offered to her youthful age, which fell like oil upon the waters. The Dowager was long past her *première jeunesse*; yet the vivacity of her conversation, and the propriety of her style of dress, threw over her whole person an air of indescribable attraction. Sir John appeared to watch her ladyship with deep attention; no wonder, then, that Christobelle's unsuspicious age drank largely of her fascination, that she could never imagine the deep wickedness of her nature, or believe such winning manners concealed an imperious and dangerous spirit. Her whole attention was fixed exclusively upon the Dowager Lady Ennismore.

All moved together into the drawing-room. The Countess laughingly apologised for the

abstemious habits of Bedinfield, and expressed her gratification that her dear son never loved the pleasures of the table—pleasures altogether so gross, so unintellectual, that she wondered gentlemen could lend themselves to an enervating and disgusting consumer of existence.

"We are very sober people, Sir John, and our little family-trio never separate after dinner. I consider you in that affectionate light also, therefore we will not lose each other's society during your stay. I must have you form a little ring round me, that I may enjoy the conversation of each. My dear Miss Wetheral, you must remain near me; I do not forget my young friend. My dearest Julia, you will take your little *siesta* as usual."

Julia declined a *siesta;* she expressed her indisposition to sleep; she wished to listen to her father, and ask for Shropshire news. She could not sleep while her father and sister remained at Bedinfield.

"My dearest Julia, I shall be seriously uneasy. My dear son, let us prevail upon Julia not to forego her *siesta*, so very strongly recommended by Dr. Anstruther, so very necessary to her health at this time!"

"My dear mother, you are always right; I

agree with you, and think Lady Ennismore should not omit her *siesta*," observed his lordship, looking particularly dull.

"I do not feel its necessity now at all, dear mother," observed Julia, affectionately pressing Lady Ennismore's hand, and looking beseechingly in her face. "My dear father and Chrystal take away all inclination to sleep."

"I will not lose my daughter for all the world can offer," exclaimed the Dowager, throwing her arms round Julia. "My dear Julia, will you not oblige me?"

"But, dearest Lady Ennismore, this *one* evening, just to talk of Wetheral!"

"My love, I trust your father is intending to honour us some days. Ennismore and myself are uneasy. You will not give us disquietude, Julia? Sir John will not advocate an abrupt change of system, I feel assured. Oblige us, my dearest Julia."

Julia arose to give pleasure; when did she ever resist solicitation! She gave her father an affectionate salute: "Dear papa, I shall not be long away from you. Lady Ennismore is so fearful of my health, that a *siesta* is considered indispensable. Perhaps Chrystal will lull me to

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very much wished to ask your opinion upon some political point."

"Certainly I will call at Huish, if you wish it."

"Julia will ride with you: the world should see you always together. It is politic, at any rate. I will ——" Lady Ennismore's voice sunk into a whisper. Again Christobelle caught her words.

"It won't be a long affair. Make a round of calls, and that will fill up time, you know." Another long whisper. "My dear Sir John, you are pleased with that Spagnoletti; it is a picture of great merit. The late Lord Ennismore was a great collector."

Her ladyship spoke now of pictures: she gave the history of each painting, and detailed the research of her late lord, who travelled through Europe in order to form the splendid collection at Bedinfield. When Lady Ennismore ceased speaking, it was time for coffee, and Julia's reappearance was anxiously expected by her sister. With the same punctilious attention, Lord Ennismore again left the apartment, and returned with his lady under his arm. He placed her near the Countess, made his bow, and offered to sweeten her cup of coffee, with a cold formality

and an unexpressive smile. Julia looked pleased by the unmeaning attention.

"Have you slept, dearest Julia?" asked the Countess, as she sipped her coffee.

"No, indeed; I thought of Wetheral, and I could not close my eyes. I wish I had been allowed to remain here, dearest mother."

"Naughty girl!" Her ladyship tapped Julia's arm lightly. "How can you trifle with my anxiety? Sir John, how is our dear Julia looking?"

"She looks in excellent health. Julia always enjoyed good health," said her father; "she was the blooming rose at Wetheral."

"We watch over her with infinite anxiety," returned the Countess. "What should we do, my dear lord, without Julia?"

Lord Ennismore cast a heavy glance upon Julia, and smiled. "Dr. Anstruther is considered clever; I trust no unfortunate accident will occur at Bedinfield. You, my dear mother, are extremely quick-sighted, and will avert much that is unpleasant."

"You flatter me, my dear lord; but my fears create watchfulness, and often, I fear, give disturbance to my sweet Julia. Sir John, we are a whist party; may I challenge you to play? I

shall give my young friend the range of our library as her amusement. I remember Miss Wetheral's taste for reading. My poor memory does yet retain the remembrance of my friends' tastes. My dear lord will be so honoured in the task of introducing you to his library. Allow me to light a taper."

The Countess rose with graceful ease and lightness of step to effect her purpose. Lord Ennismore rose also, and bowed to Christobelle. He spoke *so* heavily, and with such dull precision.

"I shall have pleasure in doing the honours of the Bedinfield library to Miss Wetheral. I cannot flatter myself it surpasses the very handsome collection at Wetheral Castle, nevertheless, it claims distinction. Do me the honour, Miss Wetheral, to accept my arm."

Christobelle placed her arm within the awkwardly-extended elbow which Lord Ennismore held out for acceptance, and they proceeded to the library. His lordship stood in the centre of the room, and harangued with the tone and manner of a showman who describes by rote what his mind cannot understand.

"You see here, my agreeable Miss Wetheral, a collection of the best authors. To the right

you will perceive the most approved ancients; to the left, the most approved moderns. Before us you will observe a splendidly-bound collection of the works of our novelists, such as Fielding, &c.; and, behind us, there is an equally select collection of plays, from our great Shakespeare to almost the present hour."

"This is a magnificent library, Lord Ennismore, indeed."

"It is considered so, Miss Wetheral. Bedinfield has long held pre-eminence in Staffordshire; perhaps I am not wrong in asserting its superiority to many mansions in the neighbouring counties."

"I will, my lord, if you please, borrow Shakespeare while you are at cards. I promise to replace the book."

"We have a librarian, who replaces the different works, and attends to the thing, Miss Wetheral; do not give yourself the trouble. My mother arranges every thing with perfect order."

"Not Julia, then?" she exclaimed in astonishment, and without reflection. "Does not my sister Julia arrange every thing at Bedinfield?"

"No, Miss Wetheral; the Countess-dowager has the management of my affairs. I should be extremely sorry to remove the control of every

thing into other hands. The Countess-dowager conducts the establishment at Bedinfield."

"I thought the Countess was on a visit! I really thought Julia and yourself lived at Bedinfield." Christobelle looked with extreme surprise at Lord Ennismore.

"The Countess-dowager remains with us," returned his lordship. "We were anxious to retain my dear mother at Bedinfield. She is kind enough to transact all affairs for me. I am not fond of business; and the Countess-dowager thinks I am unequal in my health to severe attention upon any subject. I am very fortunate in possessing a relation who considers it almost an amusement to overlook the concerns of Bedinfield."

"Julia was always extremely clever," exclaimed Christobelle, anxious to do justice to her talents. "Julia was always considered extremely clever at Wetheral."

"No one can equal my mother in cleverness, Miss Wetheral: every thing is in excellent order, and I am always supplied with money when I require it. The Countess-dowager attends even to my private accounts: I have no trouble."

"But *Julia* attends to her own expenses, Lord Ennismore?"

"The Countess-dowager is kind enough to attend to every thing, Miss Wetheral."

The library-door opened, and the "Countess-dowager" appeared, leaning upon Julia's arm. She bantered Christobelle and her son upon their long absence.

"You are as partial to reading the titles of books as Dr. Johnson, if that has been your occupation. My lord has been very anxious to do the honours properly, Miss Wetheral."

"We were not altogether talking of books," replied his lordship, mechanically offering his arm to Julia.

"What could interest you so much, Miss Wetheral? If books were not your subject, let us also enjoy your remarks." The Countess fixed her eyes upon Christobelle with a searching expression. Christobelle coloured, but remained silent.

"My dear mother, we were talking of you," said Lord Ennismore, taking her hand.

"Of *me*, Augustus? I cannot think I can form a subject for Miss Wetheral's contemplation. Pray let us return into the drawing-room." This was spoken in a tone of slight displeasure.

"I never think any one can speak of you, my

dear mother, without pleasure. I like to talk of you."

"I am sure, dearest mother, you are the subject of conversation to thousands," cried Julia, with tenderness, laying her hand upon her ladyship's arm.

"My dear children, you are very flattering in your affection." Lady Ennismore's countenance resumed its bland expression. "I must feel happy in the love of two beings so dear to me. May we always continue united, my beloved children! Miss Wetheral, you are surprised at this little scene."

The group returned into the drawing-room. Lady Ennismore arranged the whist party, as she arranged every thing connected with Bedinfield, and Christobelle sat near the table, reading her favourite Shakespeare. The whist party broke up to partake of a slight refreshment, and it was then time to separate for the night. Christobelle did hope Julia would have accompanied her to the tapestried chamber, but she retired with Lady Ennismore, after "good nights" were mutually expressed. Christobelle was escorted to her room by her father in silence. She wished much to speak to him, and inform him of her short colloquy with Lord Ennismore;

she therefore begged him to stay with her a few minutes.

"Come into my room, Chrystal; I have no lady's maid to overhear my words."

Christobelle crossed the broad gallery, and entered the crimson chamber. It was hung with dark crimson satin, as gloomy but not so appalling as the tapestried apartment. She then told her father the substance of her conversation in the library, and also remarked upon Lady Ennismore's look of displeasure. He listened gravely to the disclosure, and observed, "Yes, I fancied so—I can see it all."

"What do you see, papa?"

"You would not comprehend my views if I expressed them, my love; your life is young, and at present my remarks would be mysteries to your innocent mind. The world will gradually enlighten you to evil, when your part is to be played upon its stage: till then, remain untainted and happy. But when you enter upon its cares, bear in mind the necessity of holding fast integrity. It secures happiness here and hereafter. And now, good night, my dear Chrystal."

Christobelle returned to her room, and beheld the large eyes of a giant-centurion fixed upon her. She could not struggle against alarm;

and Taylor sat by her till she fell asleep. She endeavoured to amuse her young mistress by a description of the scenes which were taking place in the lower department of Bedinfield.

"Lord help us, Miss Wetheral, if you could but see the pride of the two butlers, Mr. Spice and Mr. Hornby! Miss, they won't look at, or speak to, the other servants; and the great housekeeper, with her two helpers, sit in a room by themselves. Mr. Spice only stands by the sideboard, and Mr. Hornby behind my lady the Countess, just to look at. And do you know, miss—poor Miss Julia that was—is considered nobody at all. Every thing is my Lady Countess."

"Do they think so, Taylor?"

"I hear the servants that I associate with, miss, make strange observations, as we do sometimes talk over things amongst ourselves; and they say that the Lady Countess is a very determined woman, and manages my lord completely. Poor Miss Julia has no power at all; but the Lady Countess is very kind-spoken to her, and they say Miss Julia is very content to be put on one side."

"Lady Ennismore, if you please, Taylor."

"Ah! she is no Lady Ennismore, miss, un-

less she has her proper situation in this house. As to my lord, miss, I assure you the footmen speak of him in a very odd way."

"In what way?"

"Why one of them said openly at supper the word 'ass,' Miss Wetheral; and another said he couldn't follow his nose without the Lady Countess at his side: they all pity poor Miss Julia, and say she is too good for him."

"I shall tell papa, Taylor."

"Oh, gracious, Miss Wetheral! don't bring me up about such things; I really couldn't appear, upon my oath, before any one, for the world. I must hold my tongue."

"No, speak on, Taylor: you must talk me to sleep."

"Well, indeed, miss! The footman, Number 7, as they call him — for they are called out by number, not by name—has been some years at Bedinfield; and he says the Lady Countess had great power over her husband, the late lord. She was always bland and agreeable to speak to, if nothing offended her, but Number 7 says it was a sight to see her *angry*. She never forgave any one, and will allow no one to differ with her. Miss Julia is so gentle! that's one thing; she

will never offend; but if she ever does, Number 7 says it will be the worse for her."

"How can Number 7 tell any thing, Taylor?"

"Oh! Miss Wetheral, he says things very hard to believe; but no one contradicted him. He says his lady will never part with power till she is in her grave, and that Miss Julia will only lead a quiet life while she gives way. I think my Lady Kerrison and my Lady Ennismore have not done so well, miss, though they are quality. I must say I should like to be first in my own house — I should expect — if my husband — indeed, says I—"

Taylor's words appeared broken, and they gradually became extinct. Christobelle fell asleep during her lengthy speech.

CHAPTER XIX.

Lady Ennismore and Julia were already in the breakfast-room, when Christobelle and her father descended the following morning. Lord Ennismore was seated with a decanter of water on the table before him; and he had sundry bottles stationed round it, from which he weighed certain powders, and immersed the whole in a goblet of water. His lordship was too occupied to rise upon their entrance, but he apologised for the apparent want of gallantry.

"Excuse me, Sir John Wetheral, and also I entreat your pardon, Miss Wetheral, for my sitting posture; but I am, at this moment, preparing my morning draught. I shall, however, have much pleasure in drinking your health, when the preparation is completed."

"I will stand proxy to your words, my dear Augustus," said the Countess; "I am anxious

about the given quantities of the powders, and entreat you to be careful in examining the measures. Three grains, I know, is the proper quantity. Three grains of each. My dear Miss Wetheral, I hope you slept well. Sir John, I am going to carry you with me per force, round the park. Three grains only, my dear son."

"Thank you, my dear mother; I am very accurate: I have just concluded my dose."

Lord Ennismore stood up with an air, which he intended should be picturesque and gallant. His lordship held the goblet in one hand, and a tea-spoon in the other, as he bowed low to Christobelle and her father.

"I have the honour to drink to your welfare, as also to express our pleasure at your conferring upon us the honour of your company." His lordship then stirred the liquid into a state of effervescence, and drank the contents of the goblet. Julia extended her hand to receive the empty goblet, but the Countess prevented the action.

"No, my dear Julia, I will receive it from my son. I know you are not fond of powders and effervescing draughts; young people seldom like them. Let me take the glass from your husband." Her ladyship perceived the goblet was not quite

relieved of its contents. "My dear Augustus, I am not easy. I wish I possessed the calmness of Julia, but I never *shall* be so self-possessed; I am always in little alarms about you. You have left a wine-glassful in this goblet, and you will not feel its beneficial effects."

Lord Ennismore's satisfaction was observable at the care expressed by his mother's remarks. Julia was totally ignorant of any concealed purpose lurking in her ladyship's alarm. She only smiled at her mother's perfectly unwarranted fears, and playfully jested at their unfounded use. The Countess patted Julia's cheek.

"My dear love, you cannot know a mother's agonising, though, perhaps, foolish fears. A young wife is not aware of the nature of unpleasing symptoms, such as I fear I see arising in my son's system. Sir John, I think we may assert it as a fact, that a parent's anxiety is even more keenly acute than a wife's alarm."

Sir John did not agree with her ladyship. He thought parental pangs must be to every heart a bitter trial; but a wife's welfare, or a husband's health, must be a paramount interest. To his idea, a mother's affection must bow to that of a wife.

"You think so, Sir John?" The Countess

smiled bewitchingly upon her son. "I believe I did my duty to my lord; I think I devoted myself to his wishes; but I surely feel a more intense love for my son. Perhaps," continued the Countess, sighing, "perhaps his very delicate health interested my feelings too powerfully for my repose."

"I am, and must be," said his lordship, in most sententious tones, "extremely fortunate in possessing a relation so interested in my well-doing. I am sure my excellent wife feels for me a proper and lively affection; but, as the Countess-dowager remarks, there is want of reflection in the young, which only the more aged gain by experience."

"My dear lord," exclaimed Julia, with gentle earnestness, "I should be the only proper attendant; and I should be a most willing one, too; if you would allow me to mix your medicines — but Lady Ennismore has so frequently assured me....."

"Come, come, my sweet Julia, away with self-upbraidings, or upbraiding of any nature! I bear witness to your worth and kindness; let us proceed to despatch our breakfast, that I may claim Sir John's company." The Countess al-

lowed no pause in the conversation to enable Julia to continue her observation.

"Sir John, I look forward to great commendations on your part. My son's taste is admirably set forth in the new drive, which comprehends a circuit of three miles. My dear Miss Wetheral, you have a fine lady's appetite: surely Bedinfield will effect a change. I am sure my Julia will enjoy an hour or two of chat with you, my young friend, while we are absent. A little chat upon Wetheral topics. Julia talks with so much fervour of her friends in Shropshire!"

"I wish they would all think of me with equal interest, and become better correspondents," observed Julia, energetically.

"Talking of correspondence," said the Countess, addressing Sir John, "how few of our earliest friends ever continue to keep up the delightful intercourse of extreme youth. So many new objects, so many new perceptions! We rarely can long persevere in the course of our early career."

"My daughter's friend makes the same remark. Miss Wycherly complains of Julia's silence," observed Sir John.

"I have written frequently, papa," cried Julia,

her whole figure becoming animated with the subject. "I have even invited Penelope to Bedinfield, without receiving an acceptation or denial. What can my friend plead in extenuation of her neglect? I did expect to be summoned to her marriage. I promised to attend her summons."

"You did not inform me of this arrangement, Julia," remarked the Countess; "I was not aware of the intended pleasure of another visit into Shropshire."

"I did not answer for *you*, dear mother. I was not aware at that time of your intention to reside at Bedinfield. I only assured Penelope, Lord Ennismore, and myself, would swell her train."

"You have changed your resolution, of course," said the Countess, in a dry tone of voice.

"No, indeed: I should like to surprise Penelope. Papa, we will return with you to Wetheral, if my lord has no objection."

"No plan can give me greater pleasure, my love. Let us return together, if you please. If your ladyship will add your society, Wetheral will be proud to receive you. Lady Wetheral will rejoice to see you."

"Oh! let us all return with papa," exclaimed

Julia, turning to her lord with eagerness; "let us all return with papa to dear Wetheral!"

"I am sensible of Sir John's politeness," returned his lordship, "more particularly as change of air is beneficial to every constitution. I shall with pleasure revisit Wetheral, if the Countess-dowager has no engagements to prevent her quitting Bedinfield."

"My dear mother, you are not engaged? You will accompany us, won't you?" said Julia, affectionately and eagerly.

"I am grieved that it is out of my power to accept Sir John's polite invitation," replied the Countess, with much suavity.

"Oh! I am so sorry! but, my lord, *you* will take me to Wetheral; *you* will return with me into Shropshire," continued Julia, anxiously watching the stolid face of her dull lord. "You have no engagement, Augustus?"

"None whatever, my dear Lady Ennismore," was his lordship's reply; "but if my mother cannot postpone her engagements, we had perhaps better defer our visit."

"I have every hope," said Sir John, bowing politely to the Countess, "I have every hope that Lady Ennismore will yet favour us with her company. Perhaps, upon a little consideration,

one or two engagements may give way, to do us honour."

"I will consult with my son," replied the Countess, with her most bewitching smile. "A visit to Wetheral must be a pleasure too agreeable to relinquish, if we can postpone less agreeable engagements. I shall not fail to draw upon my invention for excuses in *one* quarter. My dear Julia, I hope we shall accomplish a visit to Wetheral. I hope my lord's health will continue: but I do not like his pallid complexion this morning."

"Do I look unwell?" asked his lordship, in an anxious tone, "do I appear changed to-day, my dear mother?"

"I don't approve of that pale cheek, my dear son. Julia, do you notice a little hectic spot—a very small spot, just upon the cheek-bone?"

Julia looked at her lord's leaden face. "No, I do not discover a spot, I cannot perceive a hectic spot—do you, papa?"

"My dearest Julia, is it possible you cannot distinguish a little feverish appearance? I see it from this distance, with great uneasiness."

"Now, papa, you shall judge between us. Do you see any appearance of spot or fever upon my lord's cheek?"

Sir John put on his glasses with an air of grave solemnity. "Am I constituted judge in this matter?"

"Oh, yes, papa, you shall declare the precise state of the matter," exclaimed Julia, laughingly.

"No one must judge for *me*. No one can judge for a mother's quick eye," said the Countess, playfully, "but still in the multitude of counsellors there is wisdom; therefore, I should wish to hear Sir John's opinion."

Sir John Wetheral examined Lord Ennismore's cheek with great command of countenance: there was no spot, or even the slightest tinge of colour; all was colourless, still, and heavy: dull, dismal, and disagreeable.

"My good lord," he said, "I am pleased to join my daughter in her happy fearlessness; and still better pleased to be able to soothe her ladyship's apprehensions. I think there is nothing alarming in your cheek. Rather pale, but I can perceive no hectic tendency."

Lord Ennismore turned anxiously towards his mother. Her eyes were fixed apprehensively upon him: he turned towards Julia; she was engaged with the merrythought of a chicken. He again turned to the Countess.

"My dear mother, you are not satisfied with Sir John Wetheral's opinion: I see you think I am unwell, and you are always watching me, therefore, you understand my constitution better than any one can do. I don't think I am very well this morning. I could almost fancy my head was uncomfortable."

"You never give way to fancy, my dear son, therefore, you are not well. I can read the expression of your poor heavy eyes this morning: I am very uneasy." The Countess rose with some perturbation from the breakfast-table.

Lord Ennismore rose also. "Excuse me, Sir John Wetheral, excuse me, Miss Wetheral, if I appear abrupt in quitting your company. I will retire, if you please, this morning; I certainly feel very unwell, and a few hours quiet will be calming. Pray don't rise, Lady Ennismore; my mother will give me her assistance to my apartments; my dear mother, will you be so kind as to give me an audience?"

Julia rose, and offered her arm to Lord Ennismore, but he again declined her assistance. The Countess approached with exultation in her looks and manner; but soft words were upon her lips.

"I believe we old people are better fitted for nurses, my dear Julia. Your alarm, perhaps,

d be greater than my own upon any emer-
y, but an old head is more used to critical
tions. My dearest love, will you accom-
our friends into the sitting-room, and then
us; you will be very anxious to see the
t of my old-fashioned remedies. My dear
John, I will see you again to arrange our
."

ord Ennismore quitted the breakfast-room
a look of real dejection. His valet, who
been summoned, followed his lordship, as
aned upon the arm of the Countess. Her
ied suspicions had taken such deep root in
weak mind of her son, that his imagination
him to believe he was seriously ill. His
hip walked softly, with the air of a person
felt assured he had been suddenly seized
an alarming and painful malady: his person
nk into greater insignificance, his eye wore
ore heavy expression — he was the perfect
stration of Molière's "Malade Imaginaire,"
he walked gently across the grandly-propor-
ned apartment. What a creature to possess
wife so lovely as Julia, and to be the repre-
ntative of the earldom of Ennismore! to own
edinfield, and write him-

Sir John Wetheral would not let Julia depart when they entered the sitting-room. He made her take a seat by his side upon the sofa, and he held her hand, while he gazed fondly upon her. Julia smiled, and asked him "if he was examining the hectic appearances upon *her* cheek."

"No, my child, here are no symptoms of green and yellow melancholy; you look well, Julia, therefore, you *must* be happy."

"Yes, papa, I am indeed happy. Lady Ennismore spoils me, and will not let me stir from her side, 'lest the winds of heaven should blow too roughly on my cheek.' She is all kindness."

"And Lord Ennismore is indulgent, Julia, and makes you happy?"

"I wish he would not take so much medicine, papa; otherwise, he never contradicts me in any thing. I cannot think it wholesome to take such a quantity of medicine. The Countess encourages him, I think."

"You love him, Julia?"

"Yes, pretty well, papa. Mamma told me I should like him better and better every day, when I was once married, but I can't say that is quite the case. I like Lord Ennismore, though: he never offends me, except in the quantity of

pills and powders. I don't like him *better*, but then I don't think I like him worse."

"You are anxious to visit Wetheral again, my love?"

"Indeed, papa, I am. I want to find out why my friends have been silent. Mamma has behaved very ill: she has never written me a line, though I addressed her every month. I can't imagine what my friends are made of. The Countess warned me of all this."

"What can Lady Ennismore prophecy, who is so distantly known to your friends, Julia?"

"She tells me, papa, that every body is envious of my marriage, and that my friends will fall away, because all youthful friendships are hollow. Penelope has, indeed, proved how little my letters interest her."

"Indeed, Julia," exclaimed Christobelle, "Miss Wycherly has not received one letter from Bedinfield. She told me so very sorrowfully at Hatton."

"I cannot think that," returned her sister. "The Countess herself took my letters to seal, and order them to be put into the post-bag. Penelope must have received them, but she is preparing for her marriage, and Charles Spottiswoode engrosses her attention."

"No, indeed, Julia; remember Miss Wycherly's message by papa."

"I cannot understand it all," replied Julia, as the tears rushed to her eyes; "I love all my friends dearly, but now I am Countess of Ennismore not a soul thinks of me, to keep up a correspondence. Mamma told me that rank bought every thing, yet I cannot purchase a line from my own home, 'to bid God bless me.' I am very unhappy about it sometimes, only Lady Ennismore comforts me, and says she loves me for a hundred friends."

"Think no more of it, my love, we shall be all united at Wetheral soon, and you shall lecture Penelope before us in conclave." Sir John pressed Julia to him as he spoke. She smiled through her tears.

"Oh, you are *all* included in my coming lecture! You are *all* delinquents! I thought I should have fainted when I heard of your arrival yesterday, so unexpectedly! I was flying down to you, but dear Lady Ennismore arrested my flight. She made me lie down, and take some of my lord's horrid drops. She advised me, too, to receive you in the drawing-room; it was more becoming my station, and your demerits. I forgot station and demerits, when I heard your

dear name, papa." She threw her arms round her father's neck, and proceeded. "What care I for any one, like my own dear papa? I know I should be fonder of Lord Ennismore if he was not always mixing up draughts and lotions, and if he was more with me; but his rooms are near Lady Ennismore, and mine are in the left wing of this immense place."

"You do not mean to infer, my love, that you have separate apartments!" said her father, starting up from the sofa. "Four months of matrimony, and a separation already, Julia!"

"Oh, that's an old affair now, papa. Lord Ennismore had his rooms prepared near Lady Ennismore these three months, because he thought she understood the pennyweights and grains better than I do. I only see my lord at meals, and he is extremely attentive to me then, I must say; but I cannot like him as I should do if he consulted *me* about his medicines. I should learn the weights and measures in time, you know."

Sir John walked to the window, without making any reply. The Countess entered the room at the moment; she spoke kindly and feelingly to her daughter; at the same time

taking both her hands, and pressing them with affectionate solicitude.

"My dear love, my lord is inquiring for you: he feels better, much better, but I have decided upon sending for Dr. Anstruther. He wishes you to sit with him; he inquires for Julia upon all occasions, and I am now come for you. My son is full of regrets," added her ladyship, turning towards her guests, "that he should feel one of his little seizures at this particular moment, when he wished to do the honours of Bedinfield; but he deputes me to act for him. He has insisted upon my ordering the *barouchette*, to drive Miss Wetheral and yourself to the plantations. My dear son will hope to be perfectly well at dinner: he is quite nervous about the plantations."

Sir John appeared too engrossed with his own emotions to reply; but he bowed to her ladyship's speech. She turned to Christobelle.

"My dear young friend, we shall return to luncheon; therefore, as my daughter remains with her husband, you will, probably, be glad to accompany us in our drive. We shall set out in half an hour."

Christobelle promised herself little pleasure in the drive, since Julia would not be with them,

but she would prepare to attend her ladyship's summons. The two ladies then proceeded towards the hall. Julia looked back at her father, as he seated himself near Christobelle, and smiled.

"Papa, I shall find out about the letters from Lady Ennismore. I am sure Penelope is wrong!"

"What is this little affair, Julia?" asked Lady Ennismore, with peculiar quickness.

"My friends say they have received no letters from Bedinfield, my dear mother. *You* know I wrote, for you were kind enough to seal my long crossed epistles. You told me they would serve me so!"

"I have often known fluctuations in correspondence among young people, my love. I used to fancy in my youth that I was particularly ill-used; but, when I look back, I perceive it was circumstances which over-ruled many events."

Lady Ennismore continued speaking to Julia, but the distance prevented the substance of her remarks reaching her friends. Before the speech concluded, however, they had gained the door, which Lady Ennismore closed after their transit, and the subject was never more renewed. A

heavy sigh from her father arrested Christobelle's attention. She asked him if he was ill.

"Not in body, my dear child: my mind alone is wretched."

"Oh, why, papa?" she exclaimed, in surprise; "what makes you wretched in this beautiful place of Julia's? and Julia herself so well and happy!"

"There is no happiness with that dangerous woman, and that feeble son!" said her father, as he paced the room. "There is no peace for my poor child—ignorance, ignorance is her only earthly chance! Why was I so weak, so deluded, to marry my poor child to a wretched idiot?"

"Papa," Christobelle uttered gently—"dear papa, who are you meaning?"

He did not hear her speak; her father apparently forgot her presence, for he continued walking.

"To give way to a woman's tears, when my judgment recoiled at the union, was folly, was wickedness. My heart will feel this, for I knew it was wrong, yet I sanctioned it by my presence. My poor Julia!—my poor, poor girl!"

Christobelle could not bear to hear her

father's self-reproach; she went to him and took his hand.

"Papa," she said, "don't say you have done wrong; you never did wrong to any body. We all say how good and kind you are to us."

He stopped and looked earnestly at her.

"I have brought you up, Chrystal, with very different principles. I do not think *you* will bring me in sorrow to the grave. I think you will not sell yourself to perjury and ambition, as others have done."

"I will never do what you tell me not to do, papa."

"I hope not — I hope not, my child. I tell you not to marry a selfish, heartless man, as Clara and Julia have done, to secure wealth and rank, which they will never enjoy in peace— which they will never enjoy in respectability. It is a hard fate, but even the young must endure it if they barter peace for riches. God help them! their poor mother has done this, and I did not act a father's part by them!" Sir John seated himself, and Christobelle knelt by him, and held his hand to her lips, and kissed it repeatedly. He was recalled to recollection by this movement, and he raised her from the attitude she had chosen, to a seat by her side.

"My dear Chrystal, never repeat the remarks to any third person, which you have heard now from my lips. Remember the trust I have in your youth, because you have been my companion, and have learned to be silent, and to think a parent's word sacred. You will understand my distress of mind at a future period; but at this moment the knowledge of my suffering would be incomprehensible to you. In your steadiness of character I hope for much comfort hereafter."

Christobelle did indeed hope to be his comfort in age, as he had been her shield in youth. Her words were simple, and her expressions were uttered with untutored energy, but they were sincere in feeling. His society, his kindness, his information, had been her happiness; for they had shielded her from a mother's reproaches, and her increasing loss of self-command. They had preserved her from ambitious feelings, by withdrawing her from her mother's influence; and, by offering her the calm pleasures of his study, instead of consigning her first young days to the infected air of Thompson's room, and Thompson's arguments, Christobelle had known only indulgence and gentle treatment. How could she help loving this estimable parent, or fail to

make his slightest wish the law of her heart? She did promise—and redeemed that promise—that she would never breathe to a human being the conversations which he entrusted to her sacred keeping.

Lady Ennismore was true to her appointment. She did the honours of the new drive with infinite grace, and conversed with Sir John upon every subject with fluent and astonishing information. Her ladyship appeared quite equal to guide the destinies of Bedinfield. Every improvement originated with herself, however carefully she subscribed Lord Ennismore's name to the plans; and her perfect acquaintance with agricultural economy proved her equal to the task of superintending her son's immense property. Christobelle was delighted with the polite tact of her manners, as she directed her conversation from John to herself. It is assuredly a great gift to possess that polite ease, and well-directed attention, which gives a flattering unction to the vanity of all who receive its plastic touch. It is the wand of a fairy which turns words into the pearls and diamonds of the little tale—which does so delightfully

"Wash, and comb, and lay us down softly."

No one could exceed Lady Ennismore in that

most fascinating, most dangerous gift of attraction. Christobelle felt under its spell, bound towards her by the silent and potent effects of soothed vanity. She felt she was of equal consideration with her father in Lady Ennismore's eyes; for her opinions were elicited, and listened to with marked attention. Christobelle was raised above the level of her understanding—she was gratified—she was delighted with Lady Ennismore. The dull drive which had been anticipated, passed pleasantly, even rapidly, to her charmed feelings; and Sir John confessed to her, that he could not feel surprised at her ladyship's powerful influence over the unsuspicious and gentle heart of Julia.

Lady Ennismore was equally fascinating at luncheon. She did not partake of the delicacies which tempted the eye, and impelled appetite; but her lively conversation almost recompensed them for the absence of Julia, whose excuses she tendered. "Lord Ennismore was certainly very unwell; he was suffering much pain in the head. His dear Julia never left her son when he had those wretched attacks. He could not endure her to be a moment from his sight; but she had deputed her to give her best

love to both dear relations, whom she hoped to meet at dinner, or at least, in the evening."

But Julia did not appear at the promised hour. "Lord Ennismore's symptoms increased. Dr. Anstruther was of opinion his patient was preparing for another of those alarming attacks. She greatly feared Julia would be confined to a sick room many days, but her son was so eagerly bent upon receiving every thing from Julia's hand—so attached to his lady, it was delightful to witness such conjugal affection. Lord Ennismore almost increased the disorder, by regretting his inability to see his agreeable guests: the next visit to Bedinfield, her ladyship trusted, would be free from such a painful interruption of intercourse."

The evening passed away, and Julia did not appear. It *did* seem strange that she could not make her escape to her family for a quarter of an hour. Why was Lord Ennismore so anxious for his lady's society, so very much attached as his mother represented him to be, and yet allow her apartments to remain at such a distance from his own? Why was not his attachment manifested in that love for her society which would make them inseparable, like the Boscawens, like the Pynsents, nay, even like the unhappily assorted

Kerrisons? Surely, Julia might be replaced by the anxious mother, while she visited at intervals her own father! Christobelle was infinitely astonished at Julia's complete seclusion with Lord Ennismore, for she knew her strong affection to her own family, and the little anxiety she could suffer for a man whom she professed to like "pretty well!" This was not love, to compel that devotion of time and thought to her husband's comforts which Anna Maria would have shown to her honest-hearted and beloved Tom Pynsent. It was a line of conduct Christobelle could not comprehend, and her father did not enlighten her on the subject, when she expressed her sentiments to him at parting for the night. He doubtless felt and understood the whole system pursued by the Dowager Countess to sustain her power at Bedinfield; but Christobelle was too young to be initiated in the wiles of the human heart, and she wept to think her sister could absent herself so long from those who loved her, and who had journeyed so far to enjoy her presence.

The second morning's meal was ungraced by Julia still. Lord Ennismore was even "seriously" indisposed; and her ladyship spoke with feeling, and at great length, of her own parental anxiety.

Her mind was torn to pieces with agitation and alarm. She fancied sometimes, the mild air of the South of Italy would be necessary to the recovery of her son's health. Julia would be so confined at Bedinfield, she thought. The bright climate of Rome or Naples would be beneficial to both her children, and, perhaps, brace her own nerves. She had talked to Dr. Anstruther upon the subject, and he quite went with her in her ideas of Rome. "What did her dear Sir John think?"

Sir John could form no opinion. He was not acquainted with the nature of the attacks which afflicted Lord Ennismore, and Julia's health was excellent, if he was to judge by her blooming and healthy complexion.

"True, my dear sir; Julia does indeed give evidence of health, and a tranquil mind. I am most happy in the knowledge, indeed in her own assurance, that her heart is free from care. I have spoken to her this morning, and she seems delighted with the prospect of a continental tour. I am very uneasy about my son."

"Have you had medical advice from town, Lady Ennismore?"

"No: Dr. Anstruther is remarkably clever. My son, as well as myself, pin our faith upon

his advise. I am never easy without Dr. Anstruther. We could not consult a more intelligent medical adviser."

"As I purpose leaving Bedinfield early to-morrow morning, your ladyship may perhaps....."

"My dear friend, you must not quit us in this hurried way! Surely you do not leave Bedinfield so soon!" The Countess spoke in tones of regret, but her eyes betrayed her pleasurable feelings. "I must mourn my son's illness, since it removes you from us. The next visit must be at some moment more favourable to all parties. This has been an unfortunate occurrence. I must lament this very unfortunate occurrence."

"I wish to see my daughter before I quit Bedinfield," said Sir John Wetheral, with seriousness of look and manner. "I must see my daughter before I return to Wetheral: probably she will not be so closely confined to-day."

"I hope not—I will try to hope not," replied the Countess; "but my fears will not allow me to be tranquil. When our breakfast is concluded, I will visit our invalid again, and, if possible, release my dear Julia. She is very watchful and attentive, dear creature. I cannot

wonder at Ennismore's anxiety to have her with him. We will see what this hour has produced."

Breakfast was concluded in silence. The Countess lost her lively flow of spirits, and Sir John did not contribute his usual portion of pleasant conversation. The trio gradually became silent and sad, and Lady Ennismore, politely expressing her hopes that they should yet alter their intention of leaving Bedinfield, rose to visit her son. She hoped Julia might return to them, when she was with the dear invalid, to take her place; but, if a short time intervened, she trusted they would find amusement in the stores of the library, or in perambulating the grounds. All and every thing was at their command.

The father and daughter were alone for some hours. Each moment, as it sped rapidly on, was full of hope that Julia was on her way to gladden their sight, and delight their hearts; but, as time wore on, they feared some evil accident had befallen the unfortunate Lord Ennismore. The door at last opened, and the same attendant, who appeared at their entrance into Bedinfield, again presented herself.

"The Countess of Ennismore regrets the necessity of her absence, Sir John, but she cannot

quit my lord's apartment. I am deputed to bear her compliments, and the regret of the young Lady Ennismore. The Countess commands me to say the carriages are at your disposal, and her ladyship trusts you will excuse her presence till the hour of dinner."

"I fear his lordship is very unwell," observed Sir John, fixing his eyes upon the unwelcome messenger with an expression of strong disbelief in her statement; but she avoided meeting his gaze.

"I am commanded to unfold my message to Sir John Wetheral, but I was not authorised to speak beyond its purport. I must now return to her ladyship."

"Stay one instant," resumed Sir John, "and take back my answer. Tell your lady, I will not occupy the time and services, which appear to be required on Lord Ennismore's part. I will order my carriage immediately; but I wish for one moment to take leave of my daughter, Lady Ennismore, ere I leave her to the mournful task of watching by her patient. My daughter and myself are useless, since our exertions cannot benefit Lord Ennismore. I wish to see my daughter, if you please; and I shall be obliged by your conveying my wishes to one of her people."

The attendant of Lady Ennismore retired, and they were again two hours without receiving any interruption. The carriage had been some moments at the door, and Sir John was walking up and down the room with hasty steps, when a note was presented to him, upon a silver waiter, by Lady Ennismore's footman.

"My dear Sir John,

"I cannot wonder at your flight—this is a place of sorrow and sickness, unfit for the healthy and happy. May we meet soon again! Julia and myself dare not quit for a moment our beloved and suffering invalid — he is in great torment.

"Yours most truly,

"E. ENNISMORE."

Sir John Wetheral rang the bell: a brief pause, and the footman reappeared.

"Is Dr. Anstruther at this moment in the house?"

"I believe the doctor is now with my lord, Sir John."

"I wish to see Dr. Anstruther the instant he quits Lord Ennismore's apartment."

The servant bowed, and disappeared.

"This is hopeless and helpless," observed Sir John; "I can only increase Julia's distress, by

remaining at Bedinfield. What use will it be to inquire into the machinations of the Countess, except to reap bitterness, and perceive my inability to rouse the torpid character of her son. My poor Julia's fate depends upon that artful woman's will. It is vain to look on, and witness that which I cannot control."

"But Lord Ennismore is very ill, papa," exclaimed the sorrowing Christobelle. "Lord Ennismore is very ill, and Julia cannot leave him to bid us farewell! Will he die, papa?"

Sir John made no reply to the hurried question. He was struggling with his own emotions. He led his daughter in silence through the file of footmen in the hall to the entrance-door, where his carriage waited, already packed and surmounted by Taylor. Hornby advanced to inform him of Dr. Anstruther's departure from Bedinfield; he had driven away before Sir John's message had been delivered to him. Sir John made no remark; he handed Christobelle into the carriage, and ordered the door to be closed: he did not enter it himself. Christobelle entreated him to join her. "My dear papa, where are you going to ride?"

"In the rumble, my love: the air will do me good. Take Taylor inside."

The exchange was made quickly. Sir John took possession of the rumble, which enabled him to commune with his own thoughts in silence, and they quitted for ever the magnificent home, which Julia's fatal ambition had preferred to the happy days of her singlehood, in the less courtly domain of Wetheral Castle. They left, for ever, the towers of Bedinfield, its wooded hills, its calmly beautiful and luxuriant scenery : they never more beheld its ancient walls, or visited the home of Julia's choice. In ten days after Sir John Wetheral's return into Shropshire, the Bedinfield establishment, including Dr. Anstruther, were on their road to Florence, and it was said Lord Ennismore's health had compelled the sudden and silently arranged movement.

CHAPTER XX.

A twelvemonth passed by, unmarked by any event, save the marriage of Miss Wycherly. Mr. and Mrs. Charles Spottiswoode resided at Lidham, and Sir John Spottiswoode had returned to England, to inhabit his almost desolate property in Worcestershire. Lady Spottiswoode and her daughter were invited to remain with him at Alverton, to enliven his home, till he could endow it with a wife; but Sir John's fastidious taste gave little promise to the gay partakers of Lady Spottiswoode's festivities, that she would be restored to her once agreeably filled jointure-house, in the Abbey Foregate.

Worcestershire, also, lay wide and far between the growing loves of Miss Spottiswoode and Mr. John Tyndal; but there was resolution on his side, and encouragement on the part of the lady; and the repeated absences of Mr. John Tyndal

from Court Herbert, gave rise to much observation and prophecy in their circle. The Tom Pynsents were at Hatton, rejoicing in the prospect of an heir to its prosperity; and Mrs. Pynsent's ecstasy could only be equalled by the anxiety she manifested to keep Anna Maria's mind easy. Her whims, in every respect, were to be met with instant fulfilment. Mrs. Pynsent formed a most amusing contrast to the fearful Miss Tabitha Boscawen.

Christobelle was domesticated at Hatton a fortnight before her sister's expected confinement. Her father rejoiced in her visits, for she was then withdrawn from her mother's increasing petulance—a petulance, which began to vent its puerile vehemence upon every being within her power, and which fell upon Christobelle with peculiar violence.

The extremity of her ladyship's patience had given way under repeated disappointments connected with Bedinfield and Ripley. Those matches, which she had most fondly considered her own scheme, prosecuted to their close, by her own determination and skill, in the very face of her husband's objections, had given her no satisfaction. Bedinfield was now deserted by her daughter for a foreign land; and Sir Foster

Kerrison had interdicted the meeting of Clara and her mother at Ripley. He considered Lady Wetheral an aider and abettor of his wife's violent spirit; and, having once forbidden the presence of her ladyship within the walls, the gibing and bitter reproaches of Clara strengthened and decided his prohibition. Vexed and irritated by these occurrences, Lady Wetheral could not turn her attention to her happily-established Anna Maria, or the gay-hearted Isabel, with her darling child: she forbade Christobelle ever offending her ears with sounds so repugnant to her taste.

"Hold your tongue, Bell. I do not choose to be lectured by a pert girl of thirteen. What is Tom Pynsent to me? I detest a man who can tamely bear to live shut up with those people at Hatton; and who can bear the avarice of Boscawen, driving a stupid pair of horses, when he can so well afford four? Those were your father's matches, not mine."

"I thought you particularly wished Tom Pynsent to propose to Anna Maria, mamma?"

"Hold your tongue, Bell."

Christobelle was happy to escape from the cares of Wetheral, to the perfect freedom of Hatton. Provided every one spoke their mind, and that mind was free from mean pride, Mrs.

Pynsent was content. Her good-humour to those she loved was proverbial, as her detestation of folly was public. Luckily, Christobelle was ranked among her favourites at her first visit.

"You young thing, so you are come to Hatton, are you? Shake hands. I shall like *you*, because you showed a good feeling about your dare-devil sister Kerrison, some time ago. I like warm-hearted people, without nonsense and pride—here's a welcome to you, you great, tall, good-looking thing." Mrs. Pynsent wrung her hand with a good will, which gave severe pain. Christobelle tried to smile.

"What, my welcome is rough, is it? Make a face at once, and don't pretend you are pleased, when you are no such thing. There's your sister —she's a proper little tub—and there's Tom, as handsome as ever—and here's my Bobby, with the gout; but you may go and shake hands with him. The poor soul can't wag from the sofa."

Christobelle was received affectionately by all and each. Mrs. Pynsent was full of kind inquiries. Some fell kindly upon her young friend's heart, and some remarks had better have been left unsaid.

"Well, and how is your father, my young

one? A better creature never walked this earth than Sir John. How is he?"

"Quite well, and desires his compliments."

"Ay, to be sure—and my lady, how is she?"

"I left mamma very unwell."

"Too-too! she can't be ill. Hasn't she married her daughters to two mad scamps, that her heart was set upon? What is she ill about? Can't she get *you* off, just yet, that she is so dull? She had better throw you at Selgrave's head. Well, and how is my pretty Mrs. Boscawen?"

Christobelle gave Mrs. Pynsent a full account of Isabel's health, and her happiness at Brierly.

"Very proper; I am glad to hear it. That was your father's match, missy. He valued a good man. Lord, Tom, what are you doing there, with Anna Maria?"

Tom Pynsent was removing a basket of apricots from his lady's vicinity.

"I won't let my wife eat these unripe things, to make herself ill, and bring on all sorts of queer feelings. Upon my soul, you have eaten six half-ripe apricots; you have eaten sour things enough to kill an old fox, much less a little delicate creature like yourself."

"Just one apricot more, Tom," said Anna Maria, coaxingly.

"By Jove, I'll throw them out to the dogs, Anna! You shall not eat such trash."

"Just *one* more, Tom," continued his lady, advancing her hand towards the basket, and looking half-beseechingly, half-saucily, at him.

"Upon my word, you are enough to drive a man distracted! I declare you are more trouble to me than the kennel!" cried Tom Pynsent, unable to resist her *minauderie*, and again surrendering the basket of apricots to her grasp. "I'm sure I hope this won't happen every time."

"Ha, ha," cried Mrs. Pynsent, "and that's the fear, is it, Master Tommy? Give up the fruit, and let her eat as much as she likes. Do you remember, Bobby, how I gobbled your pines, once upon a time?"

Mr. Pynsent looked up from his newspaper, and shrugged his shoulders. "I remember a good deal, Pen."

"I'll be bound you do, Bobby."

Anna Maria now expressed a wish to walk with her sister into the flower-garden. Tom rather demurred at her descending the long flight of steps. Mrs. Pynsent would allow no opposition.

"Come now, Tommy, let the poor thing hobble about, if she wishes it; and, if she drops down, pick her up again. I hate a poor unfortunate woman to be refused any thing. I am sure it's no sinecure to be such a roundabout."

Tom Pynsent was easily persuaded into measures which he endured pain in refusing to his lady. His affectionate heart was only anxious to do right by a creature, whose very footsteps he worshipped; and his watchfulness proceeded from the fear of losing that which was dearer to him than light or life. Anna Maria revelled in the very wantonness of happiness, and she delighted in drawing forth her husband's attentions, by every little inventive art. She loved also to rouse his alarms; and enjoyed, with rapturous delight, the expression of his honest affection.

One morning, as the ladies sat at work, amused by Tom's account of the progress of his kennel, Anna Maria suddenly sank back upon the sofa, and, by her closed eyes, and the work falling from her hands, Mrs. Pynsent did indeed fear some fatal termination to her son's hopes. Tom Pynsent sat rooted to the spot; his clasped hands and trembling lips exhibiting every appalling alarm. Mrs. Pynsent and Christobell

flew to Anna Maria's assistance; but the apparently dying victim opened her eyes, and laughed heartily, exclaiming—

"My dear Tom, I wanted to see how you would look at my death; come to me, Tom, and don't look so overpowered."

Tom Pynsent flew to her, as the blood rushed violently into his face, by the reaction of hope against the horrors of despair. He threw his arms round her, as she looked half terrified at her own thoughtlessness.

"By all that's horrible, Anna Maria, never give me such a useless fright again; I might have had an apoplectic stroke. How could you play me such a devil's trick?"

She stroked his cheek, as she whispered, "I just wanted to amuse myself, Tom."

"Yes, it might amuse *you*, but what sort of amusement was it to me? What would you have done, if I had dropped down dead with the shock?"

"Cried, Tom," answered Anna Maria, putting her finger to her eye, and looking demure. Tom Pynsent looked at her with admiring affection.

"Upon my word, if you play me this trick again, I'll—"

Anna Maria placed her hand upon his lips,

and a little playful scene ensued, which ended in the usual way. It gave the happy wife the delight of witnessing her husband's sincere alarm and love, and Tom Pynsent was charmed with the little ruse, which gave a zest to the day's routine. "It was," he said, "one of those sly tricks which his little wife acted so prettily, doubling and harking back, like a knowing vixen fox. He thought a wife and a fox were devilish alike in their politics."

It was a pleasing sight to witness the happy understanding which prevailed among the members composing the family circles at Hatton. If Mrs. Pynsent failed—and fail she assuredly did, in the elegances of polished life—yet her domination was kindly wielded over those who lived under her roof. She respected and loved her husband, though his cognomen of "Bobby" threw a shade of ridicule round her gentlest expostulations. She loved her Tom with that blind enthusiastic fondness which extended itself to every thing connected with him. She loved his wife, because she belonged to Tom—the dogs were Tom's dogs — Bobby was Tom's father. Hatton would, eventually, belong to Tom; therefore, her heart warmed to every one around her. Was not Christobelle also a favourite? Had she

not come to Hatton to *see* Tom?—Mrs. Pynsent cautioned Anna Maria not to repeat her fainting-fit, or trench upon the sacred ground of her husband's feeling heart too closely; at present she was safe, and Tom was pleased, so it did not signify.

"The deuce take the best of them, my dear; if they are often called upon for sorrow, it hardens them, as the cold air stiffens your sticks of lollypops. Tommy is but a man, after all; and the dog must be amused, not frightened. What an owl he looked, bless his heart!"

Sir John Spottiswoode appeared suddenly at Hatton. He was staying at Lidham, and excursing among his friends in Shropshire. Mrs. Pynsent insisted upon Sir John becoming their guest, and enforced her request in her usual quaintly expressive style.

"Here, hollo, Sir Jacky, you can't think of leaving us at the rate of a sneaking call! Make yourself at home, man; and stay with us till Tom's wife —"

An earnest look of entreaty from Anna Maria checked the rapidity of Mrs. Pynsent's speech. She hesitated.

"Stay with us, Sir Jacky, till—I'll be hanged if I know what I was going to say! — if you

haven't put every thing out of my head, Anna Maria. What did you think I was going to say? I wasn't going to talk like Sally Hancock."

"Stay with us, Spottiswoode," cried Tom Pynsent, "and we'll have a field-day; such a one as you never saw in Italy."

"Oh, those outlandish places, and those snivelling Frenchmen!" exclaimed Mrs. Pynsent: "come to us, and here's a pretty girl, worth all your mamzells."

Mrs. Pynsent pointed Sir John Spottiswoode's attention to Christobelle. The timid girl felt a poignant shame, which caused deep blushes to suffuse her face and neck, and she placed herself behind Anna Maria, till an opportunity offered to escape from the room. When she returned Sir John had departed, but he was to become a guest at Hatton for some days, on the following morning. He was to accompany Mr. Wycherly and the Charles Spottiswoodes to dinner. Mrs. Pynsent rallied Christobelle upon her flight from the sitting-room.

"Why, hollo, my young one, you seem to shrink under a little notice. That won't do for my lady, some time hence. You must expect notice now. Don't be a fool — an affected fool

—or any thing of that kind; but you must expect to hear yourself admired. Why, you're a monstrous fine girl, and, if you don't beat Lady Kerrison in a few years, my name is not Pen Pynsent."

Christobelle blushed more deeply and painfully than before.

"Come, Miss Bell, try to bear beauty without reddening so furiously. Don't be argued into selling it to the best bidder, and you need not be ashamed of it."

"My dear Miss Wetheral," said the peaceable Mr. Pynsent, "come and shelter yourself under my wing."

"A pretty wing you have got to shelter her with, Bobby."

Mr. Pynsent, to use a parliamentary expression, "withdrew his motion," and Christobelle was again exposed to his lady's jests.

"Now, I say, Sir Jacky would be a proper sort of beau for you, Miss Bell. A long-legged fellow, as steady as our best hound, with a nice estate, and a good temper."

"I would rather not leave papa," answered poor Christobelle, almost inclined to weep.

Mrs. Pynsent laughed heartily. "A good joke this, for Jacky. I only mention it, my

dear, to be beforehand with my Lady Wetheral. When she tells you of Sir Jacky's estate, you can say it came from *me* first. I recommended the spec, mind. It will be droll enough if I get before my lady, in a matrimonial speculation."

"Come, now, mother, don't tease my friend, Bell," cried the kind-hearted Tom. "I won't allow any teasing. I shall bespeak Bell for my second wife; no one else shall have her."

"What is that?" asked Anna Maria, raising her head from examining a painted screen.

"Why, Bell has promised to be my wife, the very next time you die, you little rascal." Anna Maria snapped her fingers at him with a smile; Tom Pynsent snatched a kiss, and proceeded.

"If any one teases sister Bell, I shall feel called upon to take her part, so run and put on your habit, Bell, and we'll have a scamper with all the dogs."

Thus ended Christobelle's trouble and blushes; and Mrs. Pynsent good-humouredly forbore to distress her in future, by recurring to her appearance, or extolling the fortune and long legs of Sir John Spottiswoode.

When every species of joke was withdrawn, which caused feelings of annoyance, Christobelle

liked Sir John Spottiswoode's society. He had travelled much; and she loved to listen to his accounts of the places he had frequented, and the objects he had observed with interest. Sir John was sparkling in his descriptions, and he saw that Christobelle lent an attentive ear to all his communications; a flattering circumstance, even though the listener proved a girl of thirteen. They were the best friends in the world. Christobelle loved to question him upon foreign subjects, and his very easy manners made her cast away gradually the alarm and restraint of her first acquaintance with a man so much her senior in age and mental acquirements. Sir John had seen the Ennismores at Florence. They were very gay, and Julia was considered the loveliest Englishwoman in Florence. Her society was greatly courted, and there was a Colonel Neville who was deeply attached to her. Every body pitied Colonel Neville. The Countess encouraged his attentions to her daughter-in-law, which made poor Neville's case more pitiable. The young Lady Ennismore had given no occasion for remark, for her conduct was unimpeachable, but poor Neville was sacrificed. He could not tear himself away, when Sir John quitted Italy. He was lingering near Lady En-

nismore. It must be a case of strong temptation, he thought, for the young Countess. Neville was a fine agreeable fellow, and Lord Ennismore looked more fit for the grave. Pen Spottiswoode was extremely uneasy about her old friend.

In such interesting subjects, Christobelle's attention was deeply fixed; and, whether they rode or walked, she generally found herself by the side of Sir John Spottiswoode. Mrs. Pynsent winked her eye, if their glances met upon these occasions, but she refrained from making any remark, except by implication.

"I say, Miss Bell, if you would rather not ride to-day with an elderly man, give me a hint, and I'll get you off."

"Here, hollo, Miss Bell, don't do any thing disagreeable to your mind. Shall Tom give you his arm to-day? I dare say, like the rest of us, you prefer variety."

Mrs. Pynsent would not allow Christobelle to return to Wetheral at the appointed time. "She was a steady tight kind of a lass, and the deuce a step should she make towards her dull home. She need give herself no trouble. *She* would settle the concern with Sir John. Christobelle should stay over Tom's confinement — he would

suffer quite as much as his little wife — and Jacky Spottiswoode should stay too. It would make Tom comfortable, when madam was in the straw."

So it was decided to be, and both continued at Hatton, enjoying long walks, and assisting each other in dispelling gloomy apprehensions from the mind of the affectionate and anxious husband. Tom Pynsent's apprehensions increased as Anna Maria's hour drew near, and his mother taxed her memory for calming and comfortable precedents.

"Tom, don't drop your lip, like Sally Hancock. Why, there's Kitty Barnes, with fifteen enormous purple-faced children: she is alive at this moment. And look at Polly Mudge, the whipper-in's wife, who they thought must die; isn't she hanging out the clothes, and handing the baskets along, as brisk as your three year olds?"

"Anna Maria is so delicate; one can't compare her with Polly Mudge," said Tom Pynsent, in doleful tones.

"Well, then, what do you say to Betty Smoker, who always wanted bacon and greens, an hour after her troubles were over. She was a poor sickly-looking thing!"

"I hope my poor girl will do the same, if it's a good thing for her," replied Tom, in more cheerful accents.

"Let her eat and drink just what she likes, Tom. I won't have her contradicted in any thing."

At length, the day arrived which was to decide the fate of Tom Pynsent. The moment Anna Maria complained of feeling ill and restless, her husband fled to the kennel, and insisted upon some one bringing him intelligence every ten minutes of his wife's health. Polly Mudge was deputed to relieve guard with Christobelle; and for nearly thirteen hours they were employed as carrier-pigeons, to announce bulletins from Mrs. Pynsent to the kennel, where Tom pertinaciously resolved to remain. It was the only spot where his mind could receive amusement, or which had power to distract his attention from the idea that his wife would not survive her confinement. He took no nourishment. He continued constantly employed with his men in examining the dogs, and suggesting improvements for their convenience.

At length, as the shades of evening began to fall, Mrs. Pynsent approached the kennel, waving her pocket-handkerchief: it caught her son's

eye as he was preparing to give "Rattler" and "Beauty" a dose of salt. He bounded over the wall, and gazed earnestly upon his mother's face. She waved her handkerchief again in triumph, and gave a powerful cheer. Tom caught up the note, and it was re-echoed by the huntsmen, till their voices rose far and wide upon the air. Anna Maria had given birth to a son. Mrs. Pynsent embraced her son in ecstatic delight, and the tears ran down her cheeks.

"If it isn't as fine a boy as ever blessed my sight! Go and change that coat, my blessed Tom, and you shall see them both; but don't go smelling of the kennel, my pretty one!"

Tom Pynsent's heart swelled with a husband's and a father's best emotions, when he contemplated his wife and child. It seemed as though his Anna Maria had passed through death, and was raised again to his eyes and heart. He gazed silently upon them for some time in astonishment—he gazed upon the infant, as it lay by her side, who had suffered so much to give it life. He turned to his mother, who watched the workings of his countenance with delight, and, seizing her hands, he exclaimed,

"If John Spottiswoode and myself don't drink like fiddlers to-night, for this day's work!"

All was joy and congratulation at Hatton. Mr. Pynsent, in spite of gouty pains, insisted upon being carried to the door of his daughter's apartment, that he might enjoy the satisfaction of hearing his grandson cry. Mrs. Pynsent would not hear of it.

"Be quiet, Bobby, and nurse your crutch. To-morrow you shall all see our little, squalling puppy."

Tom Pynsent did not drink like a fiddler with John Spottiswoode. He remained the whole evening in Anna Maria's dressing-room, listening greedily to the movements of her attendants—to the tone of her voice—and to the cry of the newly-arrived object of his affections. There he received refreshment, and he only left his station to retire at a late hour to his own room.

Christobelle was allowed to ride with Sir John Spottiswoode, to convey the intelligence to Wetheral the following morning. It was vain to hope for her brother-in-law's company: he was never absent from his lady's room. Christobelle was now quite unrestrained with her companion, and to be escorted by him alone was delightful: he could then attend to her, and she was free to chat, without fearing a wink or nod from Mrs. Pynsent. Her arrival, so attended, was pleasing

to Lady Wetheral, and Christobelle was welcomed, for the first time in her life, with smiles and kindness.

"My dear Bell, you are very kind to bring me such good news; I am such a poor thing in illness—so alarmed about those I love, that my company would have been worse than useless to dear Mrs. Tom Pynsent. Tell her how I rejoice in my grandson. Sir John Spottiswoode, we are very old acquaintance, though you have been so long absent. I hope you have brought back your affection for old friends?"

"Unchanged, Lady Wetheral, unchanged."

"I am glad to hear it. You have been staying some time at Hatton, I think?"

"Nearly three weeks, attending very closely upon Miss Wetheral, who has had no other gallant."

"My daughter has been receiving pleasure, I am sure."

"I won't answer for that: but I can answer for her very polite reception of me, and that I have received great pleasure from her conversation."

"Give a proof of your satisfaction, by staying ; Wetheral, Sir John. My husband will be full

of regret, if you quit Shropshire without paying a visit to your old friends."

"I shall have pleasure in doing so, Lady Wetheral, when I leave Hatton."

Her ladyship was greatly pleased by Sir John Spottiswoode's alacrity in accepting her invitation. Her manner wore its usual composure under excitation, but her sentiments transpired in the gentle suavity of her conduct towards Christobelle. She was the "dear companion whom she missed—the only relic of past times—the child left to comfort her age, now all the rest were gone far distant from her." Sir John Spottiswoode felt compassion and interest in her complaining affection. Christobelle knew from experience, that her mother's manner proceeded from some concealed motives, in which she herself was involved. It could not possibly proceed from any views which she might form upon Sir John's liberty, because he counted five and twenty years, and Christobelle was too young to become a speculation; but she was assured there must be some powerful reason to effect such a startling change in her manner of addressing her. Where was the "stupid, tiresome, unloveable Bell" of their last meeting? She was, like Sir John Spottiswoode, unchanged;

but she was addressed as the creature who had long been the only object of her mother's cares and affection, since the marriage of Lady Kerrison. This was incomprehensible.

Sir John Wetheral accompanied them in their return to Hatton, and Mrs. Pynsent was eager to exhibit her little charge. He was summoned into the dressing-room, where the happy grandmother was seated with the babe, preparing a little soaked biscuit in a small silver saucepan.

"Come in, come in, good folks: come in, Sir John Wetheral; here's a chap for you! Don't squeeze the young dog! Sit down, Sir John. Where's Tom? I'm just making a little meal for our young dog! Tom says he shall be christened 'Rattler;' but he shan't be named after beasts that perish."

Tom Pynsent came softly forth from Anna Maria's room, and received his father-in-law's warm congratulations. Sir John took the infant tenderly in his arms, and gave it a blessing, as he had done by the child of Isabel. Tom Pynsent, almost purple in the face with happy feelings, watched every movement of its arms and eyes.

"Upon my soul, it's the prettiest thing I ever saw! I do think, upon my soul, it is!"

"It's just what you were at that age, Tommy," replied his mother, as she assisted the nurse to prepare the biscuit; "it's just such a little darling pudsey thing as *you* were."

Sir John was allowed to see Anna Maria for one instant, to smile at her, but not to speak. All were then driven from the dressing-room by the mandate of Mrs. Pynsent.

"Off with you now, all of you. Wait in peace till Tom's allowed to see company, and then we will have rare doings."

Lady Wetheral's visit was paid in great form, a fortnight after the birth of Anna Maria's child, and Christobelle was to return with her to Wetheral when it was concluded. Mrs. Pynsent could not endure the protracted visit of a person equally related to the parties with herself.

"Such coolness," she observed to Sally Hancock, who was sent for to see Tom's child—"such cool ways of going on did not suit her ideas; and be hanged if my Lady Wetheral should see either mother or child!"

When her ladyship arrived at Hatton, Sir John Spottiswoode and Christobelle were in the drawing-room. She entered with graceful composure, and in excellent spirits.

"My dear Bell, I come with increased plea-

nowing I am to run away with you. Sir
pottiswoode, how do you do? Drawing,
' you, I see. Sir John's sketches must
r models, my love. I hope to be favoured
. sight of those sketches during your
ed visit at Wetheral, my dear sir."
was giving Miss Wetheral a few hints on
:tive."
)w very kind! My dear Bell, I hope you
dit to your instructor. I hurried here
earlier than I generally drive out, in the
f seeing Anna Maria for a few minutes.
: John assures me it is a lovely infant. I
ppy she is doing so well; no fever, I
quite well, and with an appetite."
)olite and playful conversation was kept
:ween her ladyship and Sir John Spottis-
, till Mrs. Pynsent appeared. She entered
)om with the short, sharp step which
; marked her dislike to the visitor.
) you are come at last, my Lady Wetheral?
:night is a long time to keep away from
flesh and blood!"
ly Wetheral appeared perfectly collected,
nconscious of Mrs. Pynsent's rebuke. She
l with polite good-humour.
. trust I shall find my daughter awake. I

long to be introduced to my grandson—my first grandson, Mrs. Pynsent, for I have not yet seen Isabel's boy."

"I would not have let a fortnight pass without seeing my grandson at Brierly," replied Mrs. Pynsent.

"My dear daughter can perhaps receive me now," said Lady Wetheral, rising. "I am anxious to see her."

"Your dear daughter is fast asleep, and so is her infant."

Lady Wetheral reseated herself.

"A few minutes may find her awake. I may be fortunate enough to remain till she wakes."

"I don't think you will. Anna Maria has fallen into her first sleep to-day, and I hope it will last. The child is asleep with her, and Tom watches over them."

"Her sleep is quiet and refreshing, I hope?"

"We take great care of our invalids at Hatton. We don't leave them a fortnight to be nursed by other people."

Lady Wetheral affected innocence of all covert meanings. She addressed Sir John Spottiswoode.—

"My daughter tells me you saw the Ennismore party at Florence. Did you see my

daughter, Lady Ennismore, to speak? Did she trouble you with any letters or messages for her friends?"

"I saw Lady Ennismore—your Lady Ennismore—twice; each time she was accompanied by the Countess and Colonel Neville, and our interview was short. Lady Ennismore was looking very lovely."

"You mentioned your intended return to England to her."

"I did; but no letters were consigned to my care by her ladyship."

"It is very strange," returned Lady Wetheral, "that only one letter has reached us from Italy within twelve months!"

"Every body expected it!" said Mrs. Pynsent.

"I do not understand — I cannot quite comprehend your remark," replied her ladyship, bending gently forward, and sinking gracefully into her first attitude.

"Every body knew you had given your daughter to a weak man, governed by his mother; and every body expected the poor girl would be carried from her friends. Who ever heard of the old Lady Ennismore, and did not learn that she was a tartar!"

Lady Wetheral changed the subject.

"You have probably brought some beautiful specimens of the different arts, Sir John? Italy is full of rare antiquities."

"I have brought home a few things — a few pictures, and so forth, as all travellers are expected to do," replied Sir John Spottiswoode. "I hope Miss Wetheral will accept a little drawing of Naples, which I mean to present on one knee."

Lady Wetheral smiled.

"My dear Bell will receive your polite offering, with a determination to persevere in drawing, I am sure, Sir John."

"And our friend, Sir Jacky, is upon sale too," cried Mrs. Pynsent. "Here he stands, framed and glazed, for manœuvring mothers to contemplate!"

"Sir John Spottiswoode is worthy many manœuvres," answered her ladyship. "Every lady will be forgiven for wishing her daughter happily engaged to worth and high principle."

Sir John bowed low, and looked gratified by the compliment. Certainly Lady Wetheral ably sustained her claims to good generalship. She addressed Mrs. Pynsent.

"Perhaps my daughter may be awake; may I be allowed to enter her room?"

"No one enters her room but Tom. She is not awake: I hope she will not think of it these two hours."

Lady Wetheral acted upon her own often-expressed principle of never contending with "vulgar people;" she, therefore, rose to depart, and Christobelle unwillingly rose to accompany her. She begged her kindest love to her son and daughter.

"Yes, my Lady Wetheral, I'll tell my daughter Tom, you have called at last," interrupted Mrs. Pynsent.

"Her kindest love to Mr. and Mrs. Tom *Pynsent*, and she hoped to be more fortunate at a future visit."

"I'll tell Mrs. Tom, you will call in another fortnight, my lady." Mrs. Pynsent advanced, and took both Christobelle's hands. "You are a good, clever, handsome, gawky girl, and I am very sorry to lose you. Come whenever you like, and stay as long as you like; you will be very welcome at Hatton. You don't understand manœuvring yet, and I hope you never will. Never lose your blushes, and never sell yourself to the Evil One. Good bye, my dear, honest Miss Bell."

Mrs. Pynsent shook Christobelle's hands as

warmly at taking leave, as she had done at her entrance to Hatton; and her young friend departed in lowness of spirits. Mrs. Pynsent had shown her great kindness; and whenever her warm heart interested itself, it was impossible to resist her roughly expressed, but continual demonstrations of good will. Sir John Spottiswoode observed Christobelle's distress, as he led her to the carriage, after having deposited her mother.

"You are loth to depart, Miss Wetheral," he said, with feeling.

Christobelle did not answer. The tears which fell uncontolled witnessed that she *did* feel unwilling to quit the happy party. She entered the carriage in a deplorable state of weeping. Mrs. Pynsent looked from the window, which Tom had long named the "screaming window."

"I say, Miss Bell, don't cry, and come again soon. Don't be down-hearted; your sister shall always see *you*."

Christobelle heard no more, for the carriage moved on, and she caught only one glance of Anna Maria's window, as they drove round the wooded knoll, which shut out the last glimpse of Hatton.

CHAPTER XXI.

Lady Wetheral's reception of Sir John Spottiswoode was most flatteringly kind. His arrival had certainly taken great effect upon her spirits, for she rose, at a bound, from listless, irritable apathy, into the lively and amusing hostess. Her mind appeared again full of employment, and capable of every exertion. Sir John Spottiswoode was at once inducted into all the mysteries of Wetheral; and his peculiar tact in quietly amalgamating with the different elements of which they were composed, was admirably exhibited in his visit. Sir John became Christobelle's tutor in many accomplishments; he argued literary points with her father; and he was the depository of her mother's sentiments and complaints. Such a visitor was worshipped at Wetheral.

It was a new existence to Christobelle to enjoy

perfect liberty—to be allowed to enter freely into conversation in the boudoir—to be even consulted—and to roam through the grounds with Sir John Spottiswoode, without fearing harsh and unkind remarks. On the contrary, her intimate and improving acquaintance with Sir John was encouraged, and even urged forward, by Lady Wetheral. She approved the hours devoted to drawing, to music, and to botany; she smiled at their application, and thanked, in grateful terms, "the polite consideration of such a man as Sir John Spottiswoode, devoting his hours to the education of a perfect schoolgirl."

Christobelle certainly had never known happiness unconnected with her father's library till now. Never, till Sir John Spottiswoode arrived at Wetheral, had she entered the precincts of the boudoir without fear; and never, till his arrival, had she felt the enthusiastic pleasure of associating with a companion who could accompany her in her wanderings, and lead her taste, as an equal and a friend. She did truly love and venerate the kind, considerate Sir John Spottiswoode—the guide of her talents, and the companion of her walks and rides. She no longer lingered in the library, and listened for her

father's step. She had now to fulfil the allotted tasks of her new instructor, and his praise was the goal of happiness to her young mind. She only dreaded his departure from Wetheral; but Sir John still lingered, and he did not talk of Worcestershire.

The concerns of Ripley were now becoming the engrossing topic of the neighbourhood. Clara's haughty temper would not endure her husband's domination, and the scenes which now constantly occurred at Ripley, began to threaten some direful termination. Since Sir Foster Kerrison's interdiction of her mother's society, Clara's spirit had increased in audacity, and a separation was hinted at, among the reports of the hour. Sir John Wetheral heard the general rumour, and he sought an interview with Sir Foster, some time after the arrival of Sir John Spottiswoode at Wetheral. Sir Foster received him with great politeness. Sir John at once opened the subject to his son-in-law, and spoke most feelingly and sorrowfully upon the nature of the reports which had caused his visit to Ripley. Sir Foster winked his eye during the gentle remonstrance, and he tapped his boot with quickness, when the propriety of a separation was alluded to.

"Let her go—glad to get rid of a she-devil," was Sir Foster's laconic observation, as Sir John concluded his remarks.

"I think, Sir Foster, a separation would be advisable, since you cannot live together in peace."

"Take her back with you, Sir John—devilish glad!"

"There was no settlement, Sir Foster; but you will make your lady an allowance out of your ample fortune?"

"Not a penny," chuckled Sir Foster; "not a halfpenny, by G—!"

"You will not allow your wife to be a burthen to her friends, Sir Foster, since you received ten thousand pounds as her portion?"

"Let her stay at home, then, and behave."

"My daughter is wrong, Sir Foster; I cannot excuse Lady Kerrison, but I am willing to receive her at Wetheral, to prevent the unpleasant recurrence of domestic quarrels. You will make your lady a stated allowance?"

"Take her clothes—nothing more, Sir John."

"This is a most painful and disagreeable task," observed Sir John; "but I must insist upon an allowance for Lady Kerrison, before I withdraw her from Ripley."

Sir Foster chuckled and winked, as he repeated, "not a halfpenny—not a penny; let her take her clothes, and set off."

"I cannot take Lady Kerrison from your house, without a proper understanding that an allowance shall be paid to her regularly, Sir Foster."

"Then let her stay at home, and behave."

Since the resolutions of Sir Foster could not be shaken, her father resolved to seek an interview with Clara, and represent to her reason the turpitude of her conduct as a wife, and the punishment which must accrue to her in the lost affections of her husband, and the disesteem of her friends. Lady Kerrison was accordingly summoned to meet him in her husband's presence.

Clara entered the room with an air of haughty defiance, which vanished at the sight of her father. She rushed to him with open arms. "My dear father, take me away from this ruffian —I beseech you to take me away!"

Sir Foster winked and tapped his boot at the sight of his lady, but he offered no opinion during the dialogue which ensued between the father and daughter. It seemed as if Sir Foster Kerrison had no power to understand, or feeling to be interested in any thing which had not a

direct reference to himself. Sir John Wetheral led Clara to a chair, and spoke in tones of deep sorrow upon the subject which concerned so nearly her respectability and happiness.

"I did not think, Lady Kerrison, I should be doomed, by a child's forgetfulness to her duty, to become a party against her. Report has loudly declared what I have unfortunately witnessed more than once at Ripley — that it has become the scene of a wife's altercation with her husband."

"It is the scene of a brute's treatment of an unfortunate creature in his power," retorted Clara—"it is the scene of violence, blasphemy, and disgust. I desire to be taken from this hateful place, and I will never see it more!"

"What has made you so forgetful of the duty you decided so rashly upon assuming, Clara, when you fled from your father's house?...."

"I know I did—I know I did!" shrieked Clara —"God help me! I did leave my father's house, but my mother helped my flight, and beset me with her persuasions to marry that monster. She caused the mischief, and she must bear the blame. Who else had power to lead me into this horrible snare, or direct my thoughts to wretchedness?"

Sir John Wetheral was greatly distressed.

"Clara, it matters little now who guided you into this luckless marriage. You have vowed, at the altar, to obey the man you married, and your submission to Sir Foster is your duty and your vow."

"I vow to detest him all the days of my life!" answered Clara, with scornful energy.

"Then," said her father, rising, "farewell, Clara. I have no feelings to throw away upon a disobedient wife—I can be of no use."

"Stay—stay," exclaimed Clara, rushing forward, and detaining him—"stay, my dear father, and hear me! *You* never taught me to marry for this world's wealth—*you* never taught me to barter happiness for a miserable title—for a low-minded, disgusting creature like that"— she pointed to Sir Foster with a shudder.—"*You* were always good and gentle, so stay and hear me."

"I beseech you, Clara, to command yourself, and do not use this intemperate language," replied her father, "or I cannot return: be calm, and be rational."

"I will be so, papa; I should be very calm, if I did not see that man before me."

"I will not listen to such improper, such wicked language, Clara: hear me!"

"I do, papa."

"I have learned the fearful news of your wretched and open quarrels, from common report; and public opinion is against you, Clara, as it ever will be against the daring and insolent wife."

Clara's neck and face became suffused with crimson, but she was silent.

"The world, Clara, saw your determination, when you eloped with Sir Foster; let it see your determination to remain constant and obedient, now that he is your husband."

Clara burst into tears, and her head sank upon her clasped hands, as she stood before her father. She seemed struggling for composure. Sir John seated her, and spoke strongly and feelingly upon her situation. "Loved by none, and respected by none, how was an imperious wife to pass her remainder of existence, condemned to opprobrium and contempt? How could a woman presume to hope for happiness, when she was breaking down the proprieties of life, and offending her God by broken vows and unholy thoughts?" Clara cast her weeping eyes upon Sir Foster, as he sat buried in his easy chair,

winking his eye, and appearing perfectly unconcerned at her distress. Her spirit rose again like the whirlwind at his sight—she started up. "Let the world talk on—let it upbraid me with every crime under heaven, I care not; but I will not live with *him*—I will not look upon *him*—my brain will not bear the constant misery of living in this place—this wretched place—the home of him who disgusts me so horribly! Oh, take me away for ever!"

"Would you return to Wetheral, Clara?"

"No, no, no, not to Wetheral; my mother is there. She only loves the wealthy and the high; and she drove me to all this! As I hope to meet with mercy, she drove me into this!"

"Be still, Clara, and listen to me once more," said her father.

"Nay, hear *me*," cried Clara, "and hear what months of misery have passed away under the influence of wine and laudanum. I have drank wine, and I have drank laudanum, but it only stills for the time! It is worse and worse to my brain! Oh, take me home, or take me somewhere—but here I cannot, will not stay!"

Sir John was anxious to remove Clara for a few days from her home of wretchedness, and he appealed again to the heart of Sir Foster Kerrison.

He begged to take Lady Kerrison, for change of air, to Wetheral. A few days only, he would ask for his daughter's society : a few days might be a short but beneficial visit to her own family. Sir Foster chuckled.

"Take her home—never come back, I can tell her."

"I *will* return!" exclaimed Clara, with impetuosity; "I will never be turned out of your home: it was too great an honour ever to have entered it, but I will enter it now, whenever I please."

"Go along, you she-devil!"

Clara's violent spirit was not to be controlled. She struck Sir Foster upon the face, with the whole force of her delicate hand. The blow was trifling in itself, but it raised the equally strong passions of the person on whom it was directed. Sir Foster rose furious with passion, and kicked his lady with brutal and senseless anger. This scene determined her father no longer to endure his daughter's situation at Ripley. He ordered his carriage round, without a moment's delay, to withdraw Clara from the presence of her husband. It was a scene of horror to his excellent and indulgent mind.

Both parties had acted wickedly and weakly.

Clara deserved punishment for her insolent and unfeminine action, in striking her husband; but it was unbecoming and dreadful in Sir Foster, to wreak his fury upon a defenceless woman. Ripley was not the proper home for Clara: since Sir Foster and herself could not preserve even the decencies of appearance, it was better to part at once. Sir John would place Lady Kerrison in his own house—under his own protection; and if Sir Foster persevered in declining to allow her a proper maintenance, the law should decide the question. The carriage drew up, but Clara was not in a condition to be moved. The violence of her anger, combined with her screams of terror, had ruptured a blood-vessel, and she sunk at her father's feet, deluged with the blood which streamed from her mouth. Clara was carried to her bed by her father and Sir Foster, who had rushed from his seat, and now winked his eye with astonishment and regret; he bore his suffering lady in silence to her room; and, though in spite of the chastening hand which had dealt the calamity, Clara twice endeavoured to push him from her, Sir Foster remained by her bed-side in nervous distress.

Sir John ordered the carriage to proceed instantly for his lady, who was desired to set out

without any delay, and an express was sent to summon Dr. Darwin. All was confusion at Ripley. Sir Foster, except when his eye caught the blood-stained dress of Clara, who lay almost insensible, could scarcely remember the events of the hour: he did not utter a word, or join in the orders which were issued by Sir John Wetheral; but his usual habit of winking and making low short coughs, indicated his satisfaction that some one did act for himself and the unfortunate Clara.

Dr. Darwin arrived first, and his prompt mind applied the proper remedies which the sufferer's case required. He remained that day and night at Ripley. Lady Wetheral had most unexpectedly encountered the Hatton carriage as she drove out of the Wetheral lodges; and, deeply as she deprecated Mrs. Pynsent's boisterous and offensive conduct towards herself, she now gladly availed herself of her useful and more powerful mind, under the emergency of the moment. The kind-hearted Mrs. Pynsent listened to her ladyship's statement, and took instant measures to render herself of use to the shocked and distressed mind of her companion.

She entered Lady Wetheral's carriage, and, sending her own back to Hatton, with a message to her son, she prepared to assist in the melan-

choly charge of Clara. She was well aware of her ladyship's perfect helplessness in situations which required promptness of thought and action; she was equally well assured that the dreadful circumstance must have originated in Clara's alarming explosions of temper. Mrs. Pynsent was therefore prepared to act the Christian part of adviser and nurse to the ill-fated Clara, and to the woman she despised. In the hour of need, Mrs. Pynsent developed all the real excellence of the female character.

Clara lay silent and exhausted, when Mrs. Pynsent and her mother entered her room. Her eyes rested with an expression of satisfaction upon the former, as she preceded her weeping companion to the bed-side; but they flashed with emotion when she perceived the figure of the author of her misery. She waved her hand, and would have risen in her bed, but Mrs. Pynsent prevented the movement. She placed Clara's hands with gentleness beneath the bedclothes, and signed to her, by placing her finger on her lips, that silence was absolutely necessary on her part. Clara again raised her hands, to wave her mother away, and exclaimed, in low and thick accents, " Don't let her come here. Is she

coming to lecture me about my misery?—it was her own doing."

"Hush, hush," whispered Mrs. Pynsent, "no one is come to lecture you—only to nurse you."

"I saw my mother, just now; I know she is come to upbraid and jeer me. She made me marry a ruffian—and it roused my nature. I might have been better; but she would have me do it."

"Hush, hush!" repeated Mrs. Pynsent, signing to Lady Wetheral to withdraw; "there is no one here but Dr. Darwin and myself."

"Is there not?" said Clara, faintly.

"Lady Wetheral is *not* here, Lady Kerrison. Be calm, and be silent, I entreat you."

"I will," replied Clara, "but don't leave me. Stay with me, Mrs. Pynsent."

Mrs. Pynsent remained by the side of Lady Kerrison, till she slept; and her place was taken silently, and at a late hour, by the doctor, who enjoined the strictest quiet to be preserved. At eight o'clock the following morning, Clara woke from a slumber produced by narcotics. Dr. Darwin named to his patient, Lady Wetheral's wish to watch by her bed-side, in the gentlest manner, and he approached her name with great caution; but Clara shuddered and became feverish.

"Let no one speak of my mother," she said, "unless they want to kill me."

It was useless to contend with Clara's wishes. The very allusion to her mother's name raised a discordant spirit, and threw her into almost convulsive alarms. Mrs. Pynsent, therefore, fixed herself at the bed-side of Lady Kerrison. Clara slumbered through the day, and appeared so calm, that the doctor quitted Ripley for a few hours. Mrs. Pynsent was all-sufficient to meet any little change which might take place before his return, but he did not anticipate any thing to give alarm, provided she was kept in profound quiet. A change, however, did occur. Clara woke suddenly, with very feverish and alarming symptoms. "She had dreamt of her father, and she wished to see his kind face. She could not rest again, unless she beheld him." Mrs. Pynsent renewed the dose of laudanum, and Clara again slumbered.

Sir Foster Kerrison suffered as much agitation as his nature was capable of enduring. He sat close to Lady Wetheral, in the sitting-room, and did not offer to resume his daily round of occupation. He did not visit the stable, or enter the kitchen; and his attention was riveted upon Lucy, as she glided to and fro, between the

dressing-room and sitting-room, to give from time to time the last accounts of the progress in the sick chamber.

Sir John Wetheral waited, in calm acquiescence, the issue of that day's events. He believed Clara to be beyond all hope of a permanent recovery, but he prayed in silence to the Giver of all good, that her life might yet be spared, to become a penitent, and gain self-command by her trials. Lady Wetheral wept severely, but she could not believe her own hands had prepared her child's sorrow. "It was harsh and ill-judged of Clara to decline her own parent, and accept the attentions of a comparative stranger, especially after the efforts she had made to procure her present eligible position. She deserved more gratitude at the hands of her children—but she had done her duty, and the world would do her justice." Nevertheless, her ladyship wept, and suffered sincere distress at her banishment from her daughter's couch.

Mrs. Pynsent was Clara's watchful and most kind attendant; from her hands she received her medicines without a murmur, and forbore to agitate herself with asking questions, according to her expressed wish. Towards evening, however, fever again rose high, and Mrs. Pyn-

sent felt that all hope was over, and that her patient must sink under its raging influence. Clara again demanded to see her father; and, from her excited state, Mrs. Pynsent deemed it prudent to acquiesce. Her exertions were the feverish and uncertain effects of a roused, though dying spirit, which would terminate fearfully and suddenly, when its strength should exhaust. When her father entered the chamber, Clara rose up in her bed, and extended her arms towards him. "Dear, good papa, you are come to see me"—her thoughts took another and more distressing direction; and her eyes, flashing with scorn, became gradually heavy and half-closed, as she spoke.

"Look at poor Clara, wedded to riches, and see her state *now!* Where is she? Where is Lady Kerrison, of Ripley? Where is the mother who sacrificed her child, and why does she not come to look upon me? Let her look—I am here, struck down—dying!" A copious hemorrhage succeeded the last words, and Clara never more spoke. Before Dr. Darwin returned to Ripley, Lady Kerrison was gone to her rest.

And this was the fate of Clara Wetheral! the young and beautiful Clara! Scarcely passed the bounds of childhood, her days were sacrificed to

the false light of ambitious hope, which, like the delusive Will-o'-the-wisp, led her only into the darkest and most impassable paths. Like the Will-o'-the-wisp, it lured her on, and deserted her in her hour of need. Few and evil were the married days of Clara. Her maid disclosed, at the death of her mistress, the secrets of the dead. Clara had habituated herself to the fatal influence of laudanum, upon every dissention with her husband; and she had endeavoured to drown the remembrance of her error, in potent and destroying libations. Her father remembered that she had alluded to the baneful practice, on the morning of his last visit.

Sir Foster Kerrison winked with more nervous rapidity than was her usual custom, when Mrs. Pynsent announced to him the death of his wife; but his mind appeared relieved by the knowledge that she would no more appear before him, to reproach and annoy. Mrs. Pynsent's remarks to Sir Foster, immediately after her announcement of the event, was either unheard or unheeded.

"Now you have killed two wives, you be quiet, and don't bring a woman to Ripley again, for they can't live in peace here. I wonder how you had the face to marry at all; but your first wife's family shut you up, and hid your coat, that you

mightn't be off on the wedding-day; and we all know how the second wife was managed, so you are a poor thing, in spite of your temper. When the girls marry you in spite of yourself, be quiet and temperate, like Bobby."

Clara's funeral was attended by few, and it took place by torch-light, in the church of Ripley. Sir Foster sat perfectly quiet in his easy chair, and allowed Sir John Wetheral to superintend the arrangements of his lady's last removal from his home. He would not hear of any attendance, or indite an invitation to his friends; but he followed the *cortège* to the church, and remained watching the workmen as they closed up the vault. The following day, Sir Foster was busily employed dragging the lake, with his servants.

Lady Wetheral had a severe illness upon her removal from Ripley, which threatened fatal consequences. Again, Mrs. Pynsent appeared as the good Samaritan, and assisted Christobelle in long and fatiguing watches. Sir John Spottiswoode also remained at Wetheral, and his attentions were very soothing to his friends. Christobelle feared lest Anna Maria should feel the constant absence of her mother-in-law, who daily visited Wetheral, and remained even through the night,

when her ladyship relapsed; but Mrs. Pynsent set aside all her fears. "Tom was left to take care of his wife and child, and poor Bobby, who was half another. Tom, God bless him! was like the Irishman's bird—he could be in two places at once. She had great pleasure in being useful to her poor, dear, honest Bell, who got more kicks than halfpence from my lady, and come she would."

Lady Wetheral recovered very slowly, but her spirits were severely depressed, and nothing appeared to give pleasure to her mind. The Boscawens came to Wetheral, upon Sir John's departure, for it was thought their presence might rouse her attention. Isabel, truly happy in maternal cares, looked the picture of animated health, as Mr. Boscawen proudly and silently watched her erratic movements, and gloried in his lively, sweet-tempered wife. But her mother looked heavily and unconsciously upon the scene, and did not notice the gambols of her grandchild. Even the sight of Anna Maria failed to take effect upon her attention.

It was thought prudent to change the air and scene. By her medical attendant's advice, Sir John resolved to quit, for some time, the scenes which brought the fate of her daughter before

ental sight; and it was hoped a perfectly
tuation, new people, and a complete change
y point, would effect a gradual restoration
r faculties and health. It was decided
Wetheral should spend two or three years
rlee. Scotland was remote from all recol-
ıs and painful reminiscence — there was
ıg at Fairlie which could be connected
the departed; and, perhaps, among the
er scenery of the North, its bracing air,
ovel inhabitants, Lady Wetheral might for-
er banishment from the deathbed of the
who had reproached her as the cause of
tter sufferings and untimely death. When
dyship was able to leave her room without
the family set forth on their distant
y.

Boscawens parted with Christobelle under
regrets, and they promised to join them at
e, the ensuing year. Christobelle wept over
sters—she wept over the little ones she must
far behind — but her father was with her,
e would again be her companion, as he had
for thirteen years, in the happy tranquillity
etheral library. Mrs. Pynsent promised to
pond with Christobelle, and give her the
of the neighbourhood. She prophecied
ting Sir Foster Kerrison.

"That fellow will be run down again, in spite of his two wives dying. You may depend upon it, the fellow will be married again, without his own consent, or being consulted in the matter. The deuce was in the mothers!"

Mrs. Pynsent also winked her eye at Mr. Boscawen, and assured him, "Jacky Spottiswoode had an eye to Miss Bell — she could see *that*. Jacky would wait three or four years, and then pop. She thought my lady had another trial to endure; for she was not Pen Pynsent, if that poor Lady Ennismore came to good. What with the tartar Countess, that poor wizen Lord, and the fine-looking Colonel, Julia would be the next sacrifice;—every thing would come home to my Lady Wetheral."

How Christobelle wept as she drove away from the scenes of her youth, and the hearts she loved! How Christobelle wept when she could see no more the woods of Wetheral Castle!

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THE

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BY THE AUTHOR OF

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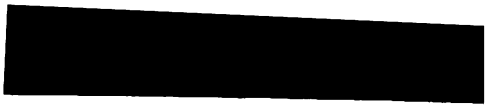

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THE

MANŒUVRING MOTHER.

CHAPTER XXII.

Four years passed rapidly and tranquilly at Fairlee. The waters of Lochleven flowed at the foot of its undulating grounds, and the mountains of Glencoe terminated the grandly-beautiful and distant prospect which Christobelle gazed upon with untired delight, from the different points where she loved to sit in meditation, or employed herself in painting its glowing and ever-changing tints. Often did the forms of Anna Maria and Isabel appear before her, as she lingered upon the mountain-tops which overhung the lake, and watched the golden sun sink below the horizon.

Often did the woods and smiling lands of We-

theral appear to her mental view; and though its scenery, so flatly tame, sank into insignificance before the cloud-capped Cona, and the hills of many names which surrounded the rich and beautiful Lochleven—still, *there* was the remembrance of her first attachments; there were the forms she loved, and the hearts which loved her, fondly. There was the scene of her infancy, and there she had parted from her kind companion and friend, Sir John Spottiswoode.

Anna Maria's heart and eyes were given exclusively to her excellent husband, and Isabel was devoted to her child; but Sir John Spottiswoode had been for weeks her instructor, her only attendant, and the depository of her thoughts. She felt the loss of his society for months; and when she gazed upon the calm lake, or mused upon the rocky heights, each and all threw back her thoughts to Sir John Spottiswoode. Oh! what would he, the travelled one, the lover of grand scenery—what would *he* say to the bold and graceful scenery? What would he say to the combination of wood, and rock, and pleasant glens; the mountains, the water, and all the glorious views which decorated Lochleven? Surely he would love its repose, its agitations, its sublimity; surely he would love its groves, its

islands, and its storms. He would roam with her through the lovely glens; they would together visit the falls of Kinlochmore: they would meditate together on Eilan na Corak, and climb the highest points to watch the setting sun, and think upon absent ones. Why had she not a brother to accompany her in her pleasant rambles, and why was he not Sir John Spottiswoode?

Lady Wetheral's health did not recover the shock of Lady Kerrison's death. She sank gradually into an invalid: and, though she rarely visited the beauteous scenes around her, and never admired their grandeur, yet her thoughts rested no longer upon England. She was content to remain at Fairlee, exhausted in body, and depressed in mind. Her temper lost every trace of its former playfulness, and she dwelt constantly and bitterly upon the idea of Clara's ingratitude in not seeing her at the time of her decease. She told Christobelle the voice of Clara came to her in the dead of the night, and thundered in the wind which roared from the mountains. She saw Clara in her dreams ever pointing towards her, and exclaiming, "Oh! hard-hearted mother!" She declared to Christobelle that if her death should prove the con-

sequence of such distressing visitations, she died by the hand of Lady Kerrison, and her ungrateful conduct would have been the means of destroying the author of her existence, and the contriver of her high and enviable establishment. She had indeed heard of ungrateful children; but little could she imagine she was herself to fall a victim to the daughters whom she had reared so carefully. Clara had died, and she expected Julia would be equally undutiful. Not once had she been invited to Bedinfield, nor was she even apprized of their flight abroad!

Such were Lady Wetheral's feelings; and her irritable and disappointed mind vented its bitterness upon the innocent Christobelle. The leading thought of her heart and the aim of her actions had ever been the establishment of her children, and upon her youngest daughter, now in the midst of suffering and solitude, did her anxiety rest. Christobelle was to beware of the sun and of the dew. It was ruinous to the complexion to sit staring for hours in a hot sun upon nonsensical views, and still worse, to roam about with a plaid round her shoulders, and a hat swinging to her arm, like a low-lived Scotch girl. Lochleven produced much gaiety in the autumn,

as many families thronged to visit lake scenery; she would therefore feel obliged by Miss Chrystal paying a little more attention to her person, that she might not be recognized as Lady Wetheral's very vulgar daughter, or give occasion of remark to General Ponsonby's family. General Ponsonby, as a man of high connections, might probably have people staying at Clanmoray of some consideration; and she insisted upon her careful attention to dress and manners. She might meet gentlemen unexpectedly, and a young lady should be upon her guard. No man could be struck with a girl whose tanned complexion gave her the appearance of having tended sheep and goats upon the hill-tops.

In spite of Lady Wetheral's precautions, Christobelle met no gentleman "unexpectedly," nor were her studies interrupted by any people of consideration from Clanmoray. Letters from England told of Mrs. Tom Pynsent's increasing family; and Isabel's visit was deferred, year after year, by the expected death of Miss Tabitha, whose illness had proved long and suffering. She could not bear to hear or think of her brother's departure from Shropshire while she still lingered, and Mr. Boscawen had promised to close her eyes ere he quitted Brierly. Isabel's visit,

therefore, must remain uncertain: she was the mother of three children, and her anxiety was very great to exhibit them all at Fairlee, and listen to the roar of the cataracts with Christobelle.

There was also news of Julia. The party had returned to Bedinfield, and Colonel Neville was still in the suite of the Countess-dowager; but few ever penetrated into the mysteries of Bedinfield. The Ennismores saw little company, and it was reported the establishment consisted chiefly of foreigners selected by the Countess mother. Colonel Neville remained desperately attached to Julia, and Lord Ennismore rarely quitted his apartments; his lordship was becoming extremely invalided, and Dr. Anstruther was superseded by a Florence physician.

Mrs. Pynsent wrote frequently to Christobelle, and from her chatty pen, Miss Wetheral received the home news of the south. "Every one," she wrote, "was pretty well except 'Bobby,' who looked very like a turkey with the pip, for his head was sinking between his shoulders, and his poor back got round. However, he played with the eldest boy, and left every thing to Tom, who — God bless him! — grew handsomer every day, and rattled over business much better than

his poor moonshine father. Sally Hancock sat with him now and then, and her company was getting rather amusing to him: altogether, they were tolerably well at Hatton. Sophy Spottiswoode was married, and they talked of visiting Scotland with Sir John Spottiswoode; perhaps they would visit Lochleven and Fairlee, and see what was acting there and thereabouts. Sir Jacky seemed to wish to peep about Lochleven, for reasons best known to himself." Mrs. Pynsent ended by hoping Christobelle was not obliged to be in love with some red-headed Scotchman, because he was rich.

Sir John Wetheral twice visited Shropshire during his seclusion at Fairlee, but his daughter could not accompany him. Lady Wetheral's health detained her; and, during his absence, the magnificence of the country, its quiet grandeur, and its beautiful variety, could not recompense her for the misery she endured under continual and unabated reproaches, or the language of useless complaint, unceasingly uttered in doleful tones. Her ladyship considered her daughter's singlehood at seventeen years of age a severe blow upon her matronly cares. Up to the moment of her seventeenth birthday, Christobelle had never received an offer of marriage,

or heard a comment upon her beauty, save in the somewhat coarse approbation which was bestowed by Mrs. Pynsent upon her growth at Hatton.

Christobelle had never listened to adulation, nor had she ever, in her walks, met a look or observation which could be construed into admiration, or even commendation. She bounded in health and freedom of heart over the mountains, and sailed on the lake with her attendant Janet, without a thought of care, or a wish to shine as her sisters had done, before her entrance into society. She wished her father alone to share in her rambles; if her fancy ever strayed beyond his presence, it was in a sigh to think how greatly she should enjoy the surprise and pleasure which Sir John Spottiswoode must feel, if he ever beheld the scenery of Lochleven. But it was not so with Lady Wetheral.

Every year brought newly-awakened annoyance to Christobelle, in the ironical tone of her mother's birthday congratulation: and it brought equal affliction to her ladyship, that she must still endure the society of a daughter unsought, and very probably destined to remain single. Her father was in England when she received congratulations upon attaining her seventeenth

year. Sir John promised to reach Fairlee, if possible, in time to spend that day with his daughter at the falls of Kinlochmore; but it was not to be so, and she entered the breakfast-room that morning depressed and without appetite. Lady Wetheral commenced her attack.

"I believe, Bell, you are now seventeen. I beg to offer my congratulations upon the effect you have created at Lochleven. Clara and Isabel were married at your age, and I am expecting every day to be consulted upon some affair of your own. You appear to have made no impression upon young Ponsonby, after all your walks and sails upon the water."

"Young Ponsonby, mamma!"

"Some people never care to understand what they do not wish to know," replied her mother. "In the precincts of Lochleven your want of power to please may pass unobserved, but I should have been pointed at in England, as a mother hopeless of her daughter's establishment."

"But young Ponsonby never walks and sails with *me*, mamma. I am only accompanied by Janet."

"I am perfectly aware that Janet is your only companion," replied her mother, drily.

"I never wished to be with Mr. Ponsonby, mamma. I declined Miss Ponsonby's invitation to join her party at Ballahuish."

"You did very unwisely. I wish you to join the Ponsonby parties. Have I not told you repeatedly that wish?"

"I thought you would be alone, mamma."

"I should be much obliged by your thinking to more purpose, Bell. I never wish to interfere with your engagements, when they tend to a proper end."

"But what end could be answered at Ballahuish, mamma?"

"You are growing extremely disagreeable and argumentative, Miss Wetheral. I will trouble you to withhold your rather imperious questionings, if you please."

Christobelle was silent, and Lady Wetheral proceeded with her breakfast; but nothing met her approbation. The coffee was cold, the eggs were not fresh, and the rolls were burnt. Every thing was most uncomfortable since she had quitted England—particularly uncomfortable, since no one was near her to make her wants a matter of the least consideration.

Christobelle offered to ring for hot coffee.

"I shall be obliged by your remaining where

you are, if you please. Ingratitude is nothing new to me: Clara taught me *that* parental misery—I can bear it now with patience. Clara has ruined my health by her ungrateful conduct. I, who sought her advancement in life, and who almost made the offer to establish her at Ripley, deserved a better fate than to be spurned from her dying bed, and see Mrs. Pynsent preferred before me. I cannot understand a coarse personage like Mrs. Pynsent being a proper attendant upon a deathbed. Her loud voice would disturb the dead."

"But she was so gentle and kind to Clara! She was so attentive, papa said!"

"I shall never believe it."

"But you remember how very kindly she assisted me, and how tenderly she nursed you, mamma."

"I was not on my deathbed. Close that window, Bell, the wind is rising; and do shut out the sound of those French horns."

Christobelle rose to obey. Two small vessels were traversing the loch, containing a party of pleasure, apparently intending to pass the morning in the island which was once the prison-house of Mary. A band of French horns woke the echoes as they rowed along, and the air of

"Auld lang syne," delightfully played in parts, riveted her attention. For a few moments she paused to listen, but the sounds affected Lady Wetheral beyond endurance: she trembled and wept. Christobelle closed the window.

"I cannot bear those sounds," she cried, clasping her hands. "I hear Clara's voice, and she persists in calling me her hard-hearted mother. Her voice is in every sound, and that tone kills me. I am not hard-hearted — I am an injured mother, worn down by that ungrateful voice. I hear it in the winds at night, and the breeze of the lake whispers it. I cannot bear to hear Clara's voice."

Christobelle endeavoured to calm her mother's nerves, but repeated attacks had destroyed their tone, and she could not rally at pleasure. Mrs. Bevan was summoned to attend her lady, and she was laid upon her bed to receive the usual remedies. Her ladyship was then left in quiet and in darkness for some hours. This scene was but the recurrence of a now constantly repeated attack of the nerves upon every sound which reached her ear from without. The storm, the breeze, the sighing of the winds, the soft and delicious music which occasionally rose on the air, all created the same terror—it was Clara reproach-

ing her for youth and happiness blasted, and constantly exclaiming, "Oh, hard-hearted mother!"

Time increased the disorder. Four years' residence in Scotland, far from the scene of Clara's tragic departure, and removed beyond all allusion to the events which had occurred, did not soften by distance the regrets of Lady Wetheral's heart. Year after year brought increased nervousness; and Sir John had endeavoured to lead his lady's thoughts again towards Wetheral, but in vain. "She had resolved never again to visit a country which had brought her so much disquietude. Clara was gone—gone from her for ever, tainted with bitter ingratitude, and the grandeur of Lady Ennismore's establishment was to her a blank — she had never witnessed it. All that she had most anxiously desired had become a source of misery to her feelings, and she only desired now to live far away from painful associations." Sir John pointed out the near neighbourhood of her two happily-married daughters, Pynsent and Boscawen; but it failed to create pleasing thoughts.

"No, I have no wish to see those objects which will remind me of Julia's banishment and Clara's death. If they are happy, why was not

Julia to be with me, and why was Clara ungrateful? Why was *I* to be defeated in my views? Why was Julia carried abroad without one interview with the mother who endured so much to secure her establishment, without even writing to me? No; I am miserable, but let me alone, and let me die here!"

Lady Wetheral would at such moments turn to Miss Wetheral with looks of reproach, and inveigh against her unattractive appearance or manner.

"If you wished to give me pleasure, Bell, you would not fly in my face, as Clara did. If you attended to your person, I might yet be gratified by hearing praises of your beauty, and receive pleasure in contemplating your future establishment; but I have no hopes for you. I have no inducement to quit this dreary Lochleven. I will not carry forth a daughter who is blind to her own advancement, or subject myself to ridicule, by the constant appendage of a young woman who is likely to pass single to her grave. If I could rouse you to exertion, I might rally too; but this determined indifference to future distinction destroys me. I am doomed to suffer every gradation of parental disappointment."

What hand could pluck from her ladyship's me-

mory "this rooted sorrow?" What hand could cleanse her bosom of this "perilous stuff?" Haman knew no peace while Mordecai sat at the king's gate, and Lady Wetheral would not be comforted, because the eye of admiration had not yet glanced upon Christobelle, or opened a channel for her energies to rise again under the exciting employment of speculating upon her future establishment. What a life was this! After Lady Wetheral's departure to her room, under the nervous effect produced by the lake music, Christobelle strolled along its banks, accompanied by Janet. The little band still poured their sounds upon the breeze, as they sat listening to the sprightly notes of "Will ye gang to the bourne, my Marion:" and at its conclusion Christobelle's eager fancy suggested the idea of sailing towards the Isle, to enjoy the softly-swelling sounds which now but faintly stole upon the ear. The boatmen were quickly summoned to their oars, and Christobelle ordered them to stretch and lie to, under the Isle, where the party were seated beneath the trees, which once afforded shade to the royal Mary in her captivity.

A boat put out from the land as they approached, and Christobelle saw the figures of Miss Ponsonby and her brother Charles seated

in its stern. Miss Ponsonby waved her hand as the boat glided to her side, and hailed her "prisoner." A large party from Clanmoray were regaling in the "Douglas Isle," and her movements had been watched through many telescopes. Miss Wetheral had declined her party to Ballahuish; but her captivity was now as sure as that of the unfortunate Queen of Scots, unless a Douglas again rose to the rescue.

"It was a party," Miss Ponsonby said, "in honour of her eldest brother, who had left Ireland on a long furlough, and who had arrived at Clanmoray, after an absence of six years. She would allow no excuses to prevail. Miss Wetheral must and should do honour also to Edward's arrival." Christobelle was loth to obey the mandate: she was quite unprepared for the little incident, and felt alarmed at the idea of encountering a large company almost unknown to her. Miss Ponsonby, however, ordered the boats towards the landing-place, and the party disembarked. The Ponsonby family came forward to welcome Miss Wetheral's arrival, and they introduced her to the assembled group.

The Duke of Forfar, lately raised to the dukedom by the death of his aged father, was present; and there was also young Lord Farn-

borough, once the Selgrave, whose name she trembled to hear from her mother's lips, when she spoke of him as a future suitor. Christobelle saw also Lady Anna Herbert, the imagined rival of Mrs. Charles Spottiswoode in her days of coquetry ; and her mind glanced back to the time when she heard so much and so often of the Farnborough Stacy family. Lady Anna Herbert was still unmarried, and she could perceive the same lively manners, the same coquettish look, which had so formidably alarmed the fears of Miss Wycherly.

His Grace politely acknowledged his intimate acquaintance with her family, and his pleasure at being able to renew it with a daughter of Sir John Wetheral upon the distant Lochleven. He had no remembrance of Miss Wetheral, but young people sprung up around him into life. His Grace had heard of a beauteous scion, unseen at Wetheral Castle, but it was reserved to him to meet her for the first time, on poetical and historical ground—on the very spot where the beautiful Mary of Scotland landed in misfortune, a captive beauty, such as the vision which now met his eye.

" Well done, papa !" cried Lady Anna, " your imagination is awakened by this scene, and Miss

Wetheral has fortunately appeared to keep up the illusion. Miss Wetheral, you should reply in character, and papa will be charmed."

"If Miss Wetheral will personate the afflicted queen," said Lord Farnborough, "I must beg to enact the faithful Douglas, and aid her escape."

"Very good, let it be so," replied his Grace of Forfar: "this is the very spot to renew our recollections. Who will be the warder, Lady Douglas?"

"If I can in any way represent the character, I shall be happy to look the grim gaoler," answered Lady Anna Herbert.

Christobelle stood confused and blushing, amid the group of strangers who gathered round her. Among the gaily-apparelled females, she alone appeared rudely clad in the costume of the country; she alone wore the plaid and bonnet which decorated the humble inhabitants of Kinross, and the hamlets around Lochleven. She felt for the moment distressed at her appearance, so distinct from the party with whom she was destined to mix. Her confusion was apparent to the polite Miss Ponsonby. She took her hand.

"Miss Wetheral is all good-nature to obey

my bidding, and we are happy in having *one* of our number, at least, attired in proper costume. Lady Anna, how came we to plan our day's amusement, and yet forget the most material subject of dress?"

"You have ruined the effect of our *tout-ensemble* by your sudden appearance, Miss Wetheral," observed Lord Farnborough; "we thought ourselves unique, and you only exhibit our deficiencies. You are often here, I presume."

"It has been a favourite spot of mine these four years," replied Christobelle, slightly confused.

"You are then the genius of the place, Miss Wetheral. Will you point out to me the favourite haunts of your long seclusion, and do the honours of Lochleven to a stranger?"

Christobelle was very willing to be the stranger's guide; and she found herself shortly after her arrival in "the Douglas Isle," seated between Miss Ponsonby and Lord Farnborough, pointing out the beauties of the lake scenery. Miss Ponsonby smiled at her enthusiastic descriptions.

"After this specimen of your powers, Miss Wetheral, do not hope to escape me in future. You would have graced our quiet bivouac at Ballahuish. No one spoke a word, or com-

mented upon the luxuriant lake, there. No one possessed your happy taste for the romantic; or they kept it all to themselves at Ballahuish. To be sure, Lord Farnborough was not with us."

"Are you so fond of scenery, my lord?" asked Christobelle, turning towards her other companion.

"Yes, his lordship is a poet and a painter," replied Miss Ponsonby; "he must, therefore, necessarily love the stupendous and the beautiful, such as now lies before us. His lordship muses at the view of Ossian's 'Cona,' and writes verses upon Ballahuish ferry."

"Miss Ponsonby is pleased to be merry at my expense," said Lord Farnborough; "nevertheless, I worship Nature's beautiful productions."

"Then you must visit the falls of Kinlochmore, my lord; and if you are poetical, muse over those mountain-tops, and visit the little ruin of St. Mungo's Isle, to hear the breeze murmur of the clans of Glencoe and Lochaber."

"Will you, the presiding spirit, attend me there?" asked Lord Farnborough.

"We will *all* attend you," cried Miss Ponsonby. "The more spirits the better, my lord, upon such a mission. Miss Wetheral, you will

promise to attend my summons to St. Mungo's Isle."

"If I can quit Fairlee for a whole day, I shall be happy to attend you."

"But mind, Miss Wetheral, I insist upon your costume; you look now like the ghost of Scotland flitting among the barbarians who have ravaged her soil, and changed her customs."

Christobelle continued some time in the island with Miss Ponsonby and Lord Farnborough, as the party formed in little groups under the trees, to gaze upon the calm lake and its beautiful shores, and they wandered round the tower and its precincts, which once held a queen of Scotland in durance. Christobelle thought Lord Farnborough spoke with feeling upon the events of Lochleven Castle; and she contemplated his intelligent countenance with an interest remote from the fear which took possession of her mind, when her lady mother first urged her intention that she should marry Lord Selgrave.

They were soon deeply engaged in Scottish history, following the current of events which closed the reign and life of Mary; and though Miss Ponsonby contended that her existence proved a course of wicked efforts to gain the English crown, and raise rebellion in her cousin's

dominions, Christobelle defended the beautiful captive, with all the rhetoric of youthful enthusiasm. It was, however, time to return to Fairlee, and Christobelle could no longer linger with her friends in the Douglas Isle. General Ponsonby and Lord Farnborough gallantly escorted her into the little vessel which had awaited her commands, and where Janet still sat in expectation of her return. Mr. Ponsonby returned to the company with his father, as the boatmen pushed from the shore, but Lord Farnborough bounded into the vessel, and took his seat by the side of Christobelle, ere it drove from its mooring. He meant, he said, to see her land safely on the grounds of Fairlee, and it was useless to deny him the pleasure, or, he might say, the propriety of accompanying her across the lake.

The vessel at that moment left the shore, and the little horn band almost instantly played with great taste, "My heart's in the Highlands." Christobelle turned her head towards the shore, and gazed upon the gay groups preparing for an early meal. Their forms gradually receded from view, and were lost in the distance; but the music continued its dying strains, and fell fainter and fainter upon the breeze. The silence

unbroken for some time, as they crossed the bering lake; but Lord Farnborough, at broke the stillness of the scene by asking stobelle if she amused herself in sketching lovely views on either side Lochleven. From question, answered in the affirmative, they red upon the subject of painting, which ually led to its sister art—poetry; and Chris- lle was delighted to know that when they ed St. Mungo's Isle, she would judge of his ress in both departments. They were both o provided with drawing materials; and, if stobelle insisted upon it, his lordship would nit a few poetic inspirations to her "better ment," upon a rock overhanging the lake, before the party took place.

was not to be supposed that their acquaint- would end here, after the pleasures of the ning. His lordship entreated permission to upon Miss Wetheral at Fairlee, and he d to renew the happiness of the last two s in many agreeable walks and drives in the ddid scenes of Lochleven. Christobelle ted Lord Farnborough's polite wishes might ed be fulfilled; she was quite willing to be sed by the society of a pleasant young man, se conversation was so entertaining, and who

appeared to be so gifted in the arts of music, painting, and poetry—arts so admired and valued by her taste. She told his lordship she was sure her mother would receive his visits with pleasure. "But will *you* receive them with pleasure?" he asked, as the little vessel glided into the cove from which it embarked; "will *you*, Miss Wetheral, admit my visits with pleasure, and allow me sometimes to join you in your walks and musings?"

How could Christobelle object? yet she made no reply, or even answered his appealing look. The young lord's countenance fell.

"You will not speak to me, Miss Wetheral; you will not say I am welcome at Fairlee sometimes."

"My mother will be glad to see you, I am sure, Lord Farnborough," she replied, confusedly, a second time.

"My wish is to join you occasionally in your rides, Miss Wetheral, and *you* must assure me I shall not be considered an intruder."

Christobelle's confusion increased at this speech, and at the earnest look which Lord Farnborough cast upon her. She could only stammer forth an assurance that she must be very happy also to see his lordship whenever he paid a visit to

Fairlee; and that assurance gave her companion confidence to urge the necessity of escorting her to the very door of her home. This Christobelle declined, with a seriousness which forbade remonstrance; she had Janet with her, and Fairlee lay too near the lake to allow of any fears for her safety. She, therefore, took leave of his lordship, as he assisted her to quit the little vessel which belonged to the Cove of Fairlee, and which her father dedicated to her exclusive use. Lord Farnborough lingered a few moments.

"Miss Wetheral, we shall meet again before the party to St. Mungo's Isle takes place."

"When may we expect you at Fairlee, my lord?"

"To-morrow. Promise me you will not go out till I come."

"I seldom leave the grounds before two o'clock. Remember the effusions you promised I should see."

"Will you read them, and judge a poor poet mercifully?"

"I shall say exactly what I think, my lord."

"Then I stand condemned at once."

"Perhaps not; adieu, my lord!"

"But one moment, Miss Wetheral. How anxious you are to escape!"

"I have left my mother some hours alone. I must return to her, and account for my absence, Lord Farnborough."

"It is not anxiety then to leave me, to get rid of me, Miss Wetheral?"

"No, indeed!"

"Then farewell for many dull hours. The Douglas Isle will have no charms for me, since the genius of Lochleven is withdrawn."

Lord Farnborough respectfully bowed, and re-entered the boat. Christobelle went forwards with Janet, but curiosity induced her to look back upon the lake, as they gained a rising ground about five hundred yards from the shore. The vessel was again traversing the water, and Lord Farnborough was watching their receding steps, as he stood with folded arms in the stern of the mimic sloop. He waved his handkerchief as Christobelle stood for a moment to contemplate the scene; she waved her plaid in answer to the signal. Twice were the signals exchanged, at separate intervals, till a grove of firs closed the lake from her view; and then she walked on, slowly and silently to the house.

She did not utter a word to her companion

and attendant, the patient Janet; her mind was revolving the events of the day, and it dwelt with peculiar interest upon the unexpected appearance of Lord Farnborough and his family, on a solitary island of Lochleven. It was most extraordinary that her introduction to Lord Farnborough should take place then and there—that her first interview with the Selgrave of former days, whose very name brought tears into her eyes, should be one of extreme interest — nay, of growing intimacy; that she was now to be accompanied in her rides and walks by this once hated lord; and that, without an effort on her mother's part, they had themselves agreed to draw, to sing, to become companions together, in the wild mountains of Scotland, when none were near to urge the introduction, or plan the scheme of their amusements.

While her mother lay in darkness, dwelling upon the evil destiny of Clara, ignorant even of her amusements, she had become known to the Selgrave of her former speculation; and without her knowledge and concurrence, his lordship was engaged to visit Fairlee! How wonderfully did events arrange themselves without human interference, and how foolishly did she, in younger days, reject the idea of becoming ac-

quainted with a young man whom she had never seen, and could not justly deprecate! How could she ever attach a feeling of dislike to a creature so intelligent, so agreeable, so very attentively polite! How rash to judge of any human being, unknown and unseen!

Whatever her youthful fancy conjured up to deform the image of "Lord Selgrave" in her mental reveries, not a feeling separate from admiration and pleased remembrance hovered round her meditations upon Lord Farnborough, at this period of time. Christobelle was deeply engaged with her own thoughts when she entered the hall at Fairlee. Silence reigned in its precincts, and she looked forward to hours of irritable conference with her mother, ere she could press her silent pillow, and think unrestrainedly of all that had passed. Yet, she heard voices in the sitting-room; and, above all, she heard her mother's voice in its long-lost tones of playfulness, addressing a stranger. She heard two voices reply. One she recognized to be her father's beloved tones. He was then arrived: he had fulfilled his word of promise to be with her on her birthday at last! Christobelle entered the room in haste, and flew into his arms.

"I thought you could not return so soon, papa; I had quite given up the idea of seeing you till June: how good this is of you, my own dear papa!"

"I have kept my word, Chrystal, to salute you upon your birthday. I made great efforts to achieve the journey in time, and I have brought another friend to congratulate you upon your looks and studies." Christobelle turned towards the stranger, and a cry of pleasure burst from her lips; it was Sir John Spottiswoode. The sight of her instructor, her companion, her kindest friend, at once obliterated all other thoughts, and she caught his offered hand with feelings of most enviable enjoyment. She had now again a companion to ramble with, to talk with. She would no more mourn under her mother's petulance, or roam the borders of Lochleven unattended. Christobelle did say to him at that joyful moment — and she said it in sincerity — "Oh! now I *shall* be happy — now I *shall* have you always with me again!"

Sir John Spottiswoode expressed his equal pleasure at the meeting, and he complimented Christobelle upon her appearance of perfect health. It was a grateful satisfaction to find she had not forgotten him. He remembered,

with interest, their former studies, and he expected to be astonished by her rapid progress in every pursuit, during the long interregnum of four years. Christobelle assured him of his mistake.

"I have been a wild creature for years, and, except in drawing and music, I have not done credit to your instructions. You will be obliged to begin my education again, Sir John."

"Bell is a dear, flighty girl," said Lady Wetheral, in affectionate accents, which had never yet gladdened her daughter's heart at Fairlee—"Bell is wild as the curlews upon the lake. She requires your society to tame her flights. She has been absent now three long hours."

"I have seen extraordinary things, and extraordinary people," Christobelle exclaimed, as she doffed her mountain-cap, and took Sir John Spottiswoode's offered seat.

"In that dress, my love?—surely not in that dress, Bell?"

"I have been among the high ones of the land," continued Christobelle, in high spirits, delighted at being with her father, and near Sir John Spottiswoode. "I have been among the

gay Southrons in Douglas Isle, and a peer of the realm has escorted me across the lake."

Lady Wetheral looked incredulous, and somewhat offended. Christobelle was obliged to detail the events of the morning, to mitigate the rising storm; and what a change came over her ladyship's countenance, as her daughter mentioned the attention and intended visit of Lord Farnborough!—joy sparkled in her eyes, and excitement drew her form to its utmost height. She did not answer—words were too feeble to express her deep gratification.

"What sort of a looking person is Lord Farnborough, now?" asked Sir John Spottiswoode.

"Most intelligent, most agreeable," she replied, "but not handsome. I do not consider him handsome."

"Are they here for any length of time?"

"I cannot tell; they attend a party to St. Mungo's Isle soon, which I am engaged to join. But *you* will go with me now: I shall delight in shewing you the lions of Lochleven. Shall we take a walk after dinner? I long to shew you the beauteous spots, where I have sat so often and so long, thinking of England, and wishing you were here to enjoy it with me."

"I am ready to attend you over hill and dale," replied Sir John Spottiswoode—"over mountain, and through glen."

"That is delightful. After dinner, then, we will set forth."

Christobelle had a packet of letters to read from Shropshire, entrusted to her father's care; and, till the dressing-bell sounded, she was engaged in devouring their contents. All were well in England. Isabel wrote only of her children, and she wished to exhibit them at Fairlee, if Miss Tabitha's health would only allow the visit—but she would neither die nor get well. Anna Maria detailed the delights of the winter's sport in Shropshire, and triumphed in the glory of her husband. They had thirty-seven "brushes" of the last season, which the children played with in the hall, and Tom had been in at the death of each. The eldest boy, Tom, could roar "Tally-ho" as loud as the whipper-in, and the girl climbed trees like a squirrel. Mrs. Pynsent added a short postscript of one line, "Take care of Sir Jacky, Miss Bell."

Christobelle involuntarily raised her eyes towards Sir John Spottiswoode, as she smiled at the concise charge. He was gazing earnestly upon her; her eye sank under the expression of

his fixed attention, and she resumed her reading; but a deep blush painfully suffused her cheek. She had met no closely-fixed observation till this moment, and she knew Sir John Spottiswoode's eye was still upon her. She did not dare meet his glance again.

CHAPTER XXIII.

"And you really have wished to lead me through these romantic scenes?" said Sir John Spottiswoode, as Christobelle leaned upon his arm, on the very spot where she parted with Lord Farnborough in the morning; "you have seriously thought of your old friend during his absence, and wished him with you?"

"Yes; every storm which disturbed the lake, and every sunny gleam which gilded its tranquillity, made me think of you, and wish you by my side to enjoy it."

"Perhaps I was equally anxious to find myself strolling with you on these magnificent shores."

"You were otherwise engaged," she replied, quickly; "you had affairs to arrange, and property to amuse and interest your thoughts; but I have had no companion for years, to enliven

my hours of solitary walks. I thought of you, when you were too busy to consider me."

"My thoughts were not always employed in Worcestershire, Miss Wetheral; but take me to your haunts, and let me see the views you have so long contemplated."

Christobelle led her companion to the cliff, where she usually passed her morning hours in alternate reading and meditation, and they seated themselves in a natural, rocky seat, which had been worn by time into something like a shapely kind of arbour, for the rock arched over their heads sufficiently deep to afford shelter against heat and showers; and under its rudely constructed roof Christobelle had passed many hours of each successive day, when the weather permitted her to escape from Fairlee. She pointed the attention of her friend to the grandly-indented cliffs which guarded Lochleven — the islets which appeared to slumber on its bosom— the plain of Kinross—its humble abodes—its little church, and the solitary magnificence of the whole scene. "Confess," she said, "that this is a scene worthy to compete with the boasted views abroad. Confess that Lochleven is matchless in its golden sunset, its bracing air, and calmly-beautiful waters. Does not this

glowing scene fill your mind with wonder and praise? does it not give soothing thoughts of a great and wonderful Providence, who has created such scenes for his creatures?"

Sir John Spottiswoode stood some time in contemplation, and he was silent during his companion's enthusiastic descriptions: at last, he turned towards her with a smile.

"I have seen many lakes — beautiful lakes, Miss Wetheral, but I cannot say I ever looked upon their scenery with the feelings I now enjoy, in gazing upon Lochleven."

"You will admire every bend of this graceful water," she replied, pleased with his admiring gaze, as he fixed his eyes upon Lochleven; "I must shew you every lovely appendage by degrees. To-morrow we will visit the ferry of Ballahuish—no, not to-morrow...."

"And why not to-morrow?" asked Sir John Spottiswoode.

Christobelle could not tell why she coloured at the question, or why she turned her face from the speaker towards the Douglas Isle. Sir John Spottiswoode repeated his question.

"But why not to-morrow, Miss Wetheral? Why cannot we begin our tour to-morrow?"

"I believe the Duke of Forfar calls at Fairlee to-morrow," she replied.

"Will that detain *you?*" said her companion, looking at her with a smile.

"Not altogether — no. Lord Farnborough said something about coming too; and, as he named the time, I think perhaps I ought to remain at home."

"I do not know the nature of the understanding implied by the mention of the intended visit to you," observed Sir John Spottiswoode, "therefore I cannot offer an opinion."

"Oh! there was nothing implied—no absolute —I made no promise of any kind."

"You did not engage to remain at Fairlee?"

"Certainly not — no, I may say, certainly not."

"Then let us proceed on our little tour to-morrow."

Christobelle was caught in her own mesh. She had assuredly made no engagement—no actual engagement; but there was an implied consent on her part to Lord Farnborough's hope of finding her at home. She had not courage to confess this to Sir John Spottiswoode—and why was she guilty of evasion? She must now relinquish all thought of meeting Lord Farn-

borough at Fairlee. Christobelle sat meditating her disappointment for some moments.

"Miss Wetheral," said her companion, after a short silence, "did you ever see Lord Farnborough before the meeting of this morning?"

Christobelle started at the sound of Lord Farnborough's name, but she answered truly, "Never."

"Are you acquainted with his lordship's character?"

"No, indeed; my only knowledge of Lord Farnborough began, and may perhaps end, in this morning's interview."

"Lord Farnborough's character at college was designated as fair and false," observed Sir John Spottiswoode.

"Was it!"

"A fellow-collegian of his lordship's, Beverly, resides near Alverton. He gave me the character I now describe to you."

Christobelle felt uncomfortable at Sir John Spottiswoode's information. It is always painful to hear depreciating accounts of those we admire, or from whom we have received kindness. She knew nothing of Lord Farnborough —his lordship was nothing to her; but she regretted so agreeable a person should prove

otherwise than estimable. Could Mr. Beverly's testimony be depended upon? Character should not be lightly treated: if Lord Farnborough's character was at the mercy of Mr. Beverly, it was but fair to ascertain Mr. Beverly's claims to belief. Under this impression, Christobelle hastily uttered her thoughts, after a second pause.

"Pray, Sir John, who is Mr. Beverly?"

"A neighbour in Worcestershire, and one of the best fellows in England. Why do you ask?"

"Because I think your friend is ungenerous, in speaking harshly of Lord Farnborough, who perhaps never offended him."

"Beverly was once deeply offended by Lord Farnborough," replied Sir John Spottiswoode.

"Therefore, your friend is revengeful," she answered, quickly.

"Beverly has borne his injuries like a man, and like a Christian," returned Sir John. "All injuries should be forgiven; but some cannot be forgotten till memory fails."

Again the little band of French horns swelled upon the still air, and the two vessels, which had sailed to the Douglas Isle, emerged from its deep shadow. Christobelle started up.

"They are returning to Clanmoray so late! Oh! listen to that sweet, soft air."

The simple strain of "Farewell to Lochaber" stole softly on their ear, and they sat silently gazing upon the little vessels, as they neared the cliff. Suddenly the music broke off, as if an accident had occurred; but the pause was of short duration—it was again broken by the lively and stirring notes of "My love she's but a lassie yet." The blood mounted to Christobelle's forehead with undisguised pleasure and surprise. She was discovered in her retreat by the party below, and an indescribable feeling shot across her heart, as it grasped at the idea that Lord Farnborough had chosen the air, and that he had commanded its execution, as the vessel passed the cliff. She leaned over the rocks, which formed a barricade before the rural seat, and in fancy she could distinguish the tall, slight figure of his lordship, standing in the stern, with folded arms, as he stood when she waved her plaid in the morning. Christobelle watched the vessel with intense attention, as it glided on, and exclaimed, with eager satisfaction,

"I see him!—I could point him out among a hundred!"

"Whom do you see?" asked Sir John Spottis-

woode, as he rose and advanced to her side—"Whom are you noting?"

Christobelle did not immediately reply. She continued gazing upon the lake, and several of the party were also observing them through their telescopes from below.

"But, tell me, Miss Wetheral, whom you note among a hundred, in that party," repeated Sir John Spottiswoode.

"He is standing with—no, he is sitting—that very large personage, the Duke of Forfar—you know the Duke of Forfar?"

"Oh yes, I see. How gratified his Grace would be at the knowledge of having attracted your observation! I think I see Lord Farnborough."

"Whom do you see?—I fancy I recognise Lady Anna Herbert's feather; and there is kind Miss Ponsonby," replied Christobelle, colouring.

"Lord Farnborough is standing in the stern of the vessel, Miss Wetheral: he is waving something—his handkerchief. Who is he waving to?"

A little conscious feeling prevented Christobelle from returning the salutation. She feared Sir John Spottiswoode would observe and smile at her action. She wished he had not told her Lord Farnborough was considered "fair and

false." She had no belief in the insinuation, but it caused a very unpleasant restraint. The vessel passed under the jutting rocks immediately below them, and it was obscured for a time: when it reappeared, the distance did not allow them to distinguish the party. They heard the full notes of the French horns, however, till a headland concealed the vessels from sight; and, ere the last faint note died away, the sun was considerably below the horizon. Christobelle and her companion returned to Fairlee at the moment the servants were passing through the hall with coffee.

The evening passed in conversation upon the past and present, and Sir John Spottiswoode's society made Christobelle speedily forget the attentions of Lord Farnborough. The compliments of an attractive and agreeable person, for a few hours, could not compete with the presence of a dear friend, whose taste had led her own in many instances, and who had devoted so much time to accomplish her talents for music and painting. That friend had been remembered during an absence of four years; he had been often apostrophized in solitary walks, and she had wished in silence and sincerity to renew their pleasant intercourse. That boon was now

granted. Sir John Spottiswoode was again her companion, and what desire of her heart remained ungratified?

Christobelle laid her head upon her pillow, that night, in peaceful thoughts; and if Lord Farnborough occasionally flitted before her eyes —if the air of "My love is but a lassie yet" lingered upon her ear—yet Sir John Spottiswoode filled her mind. His dark hair, curling in rich profusion over his brow—his manly expression—that benevolent dark blue eye—who was equal to him in excellence?—nay, who was superior, even in those evanescent gifts which captivate the eye of woman? Whom did she love and venerate equal to Sir John Spottiswoode?

The following morning produced a long and perplexing conversation between the mother and daughter, which extinguished all Christobelle's happy feelings. No two beings could possibly be more opposed in feeling, in sentiment, and in action; and never yet did a colloquy take place, without heart-burning arising on one side, and distressed feelings on the other part, to sever the ties between parent and child. In this morning's conference their opinions jarred more painfully than ever; for they were now in ac-

tual collision upon points which must materially affect Christobelle's happiness, and her future respectability of conduct. It took place after breakfast, while the gentlemen were perambulating the terrace, and ordering the horses for an intended ride. Lady Wetheral commenced her attack with that flattering address which gains so much influence over poor human nature.

"My dear Bell, the arrival of your old friend has produced wonderful effects. I am gratified at seeing your eyes sparkle, and your expression of countenance become animated. I may confess I am pleased at beholding my quiet daughter transformed into a beauty, by the mere play of pretty coquetry which Sir John Spottiswoode's arrival has called forth."

"I detest coquettes and coquetry," answered Christobelle, seriously, though she was not insensible to the agreeable intimation of her suddenly acquired beauty.

"Nonsense, Bell; it is a woman's most potent argument—it is her most powerful weapon—it is her most precious gift—because it is her greatest attraction: do not undervalue it."

"I have not been many hours in Sir John Spottiswoode's company, mamma. If I felt inclined to coquet, I have had no opportunity."

"A mother's eyes are open, when the daughter's eyes are closed," replied Lady Wetheral, with her most winning smiles. "I dare say you were not aware how prettily your eyes sought, and fell beneath Sir John's glances, last night, and at this morning's breakfast. I congratulate you, Bell, upon a gift which will create more decided effects from your ignorance of possessing it. But I wish to call your attention to my anxious wishes — I wish you to attend to my counsel, and I wish you to act by my advice."

"What is your counsel, mamma?"

"I have never yet failed in establishing my daughters," her ladyship continued, "because they acted upon my advice, without arguing its propriety. Julia and Clara acted solely by my wishes, and they won their high establishment."

"Poor Clara!" exclaimed Christobelle, involuntarily.

"It is useless to pity those who would not conform to the proprieties of life," replied Lady Wetheral. "I gave Clara to Sir Foster, with long and serious entreaties to avoid all public scenes and altercations with her husband. I never countenanced opposition in a wife. I implored Clara to be obedient in appearance—so much can be done by prudent management! I

never contradicted her father in my life. I effected all my plans without a single quarrel. There is no occasion to quarrel in matrimony. A woman's influence is and must be felt; but it ends the instant you appear to contend. Clara was ungrateful to reproach me as the cause—the idea always makes me nervous."

Her ladyship applied lavender-water to her forehead and handkerchief, and then proceeded.

"Sir John Spottiswoode will propose to you before he quits Fairlee, but I should wish"—

"Sir John Spottiswoode propose to *me!*" exclaimed Christobelle, in the utmost astonishment.

"All that surprise is foolish, Bell. You are now old enough to command those starts and blushes which look so very fresh, so very girlish. I am certain Sir John Spottiswoode will propose, and it rests with yourself to attract Lord Farnborough."

The blood rushed with impetuous pulsation into the face of Christobelle, and it overspread her forehead, neck, and even her hands: if Lady Wetheral observed the suffusion her words had produced, she affected not to perceive it.

"I should advise you to be very cautious in your conduct to both gentlemen, my dear Bell.

Do not be seen too exclusively with Sir John Spottiswoode, to attract attention; and yet, do not check hope on his part. If Lord Farnborough quits Clanmoray without intending any thing, or merely flirts with you, then, let Sir John propose. Alverton is an excellent *au pis aller*, but I would rather my dear Bell could be saluted Duchess of Forfar."

It was some moments before Christobelle could rally her thoughts and spirits, after the mention of Lord Farnborough, in the light of a future suitor. For one instant, only, the idea of his lordship's affection shot a gleam of ambition into her mind, but the paltry feeling was soon extinguished for ever, and her heart flew back to the remembered excellence of her former instructor and friend. Her mother watched the workings of her spirit.

"If Lord Farnborough calls to-day, my love, I shall invite him to dinner."

"His lordship is a guest at Clanmoray," observed Christobelle, hastily.

"He will be a guest at Fairlee soon," answered my mother, gaily. "I could fancy myself quite well again, my dear child; quite alert, as I used to be; your little '*minauderies*' will raise me into new life and spirits. I am sure

Lord Farnborough is handsome and of high bearing. I am sure he is clever and agreeable; your little coquetries will divert me into health again."

"But, mamma—"

"No 'ifs' and 'buts,' my dear Bell. I have every dependence upon your attractions. Sir John Spottiswoode is astonished at your improved appearance."

"Listen to me, if you please, mamma. I am no coquette; and I would rather die than be considered a character so repugnant to all that is holy and upright."

"My dear girl, forbear sentiment. A little sentiment, if you please, to Lord Farnborough, but not to me."

"I have no wish to marry, mamma," pleaded Christobelle, with earnest seriousness. "I have no wish to leave papa, and — I have no wish to marry Sir John Spottiswoode, and I cannot try to attract any body. Pray, do not advise me to avoid Sir John, or to think of any establishment. Don't let me endure the fate of Clara, or Julia's long banishment."

Lady Wetheral's hands began to tremble, and her features became agitated as she spoke.

"I am well used to disobedience, and this only adds to my accumulation of vexations.

Every thing has conspired to make me miserable, and I have one child left to reproach me with bitterness. How could I expect obedience from a headstrong girl, whose masculine education defies restraint!"

"Indeed, mamma, I am anxious to do right. Indeed, my wish is to please every one; but I cannot think it right to treat Sir John Spottiswoode ill."

"Who enjoins you to do so?" said her ladyship, in a querulous tone.

"I cannot — indeed, I cannot trifle with two gentlemen, till I ascertain the intentions of one of them. Do not ask me to do so, I beseech you, for it goes against every feeling of my heart." Christobelle burst into tears.

"I detest such stupid folly! Pray, don't imagine that your frowns will destroy the peace of either gentlemen. Men do not now suffer more than an hour's annoyance; a new flame soon lights the expiring embers of an old *penchant*."

"I am very glad to hear it, mamma."

"I only counsel you to mete out your attentions to each gentleman alike, Bell, and to distinguish neither at present. I imagine nothing

unholy in a line of conduct which preserves a proper and just decorum in your manners."

"I will do any thing you please, mamma; only do not ask me to trifle with Sir John Spottiswoode."

"You will do every thing which pleases yourself, and nothing which pleases me. I perfectly understand your meaning; but allow me also to observe, that I will hold no intercourse with a daughter who presumes to lecture her parent. I will have no communication with a young woman who insolently defies her mother, and insists upon acting according to her own weak judgment."

"Do not suppose me defying you, mamma. There is nothing I would not do to give you pleasure — nothing I would not do to increase your comforts; only I beseech you not to compel me into a conduct my heart disowns as ungenerous and wicked."

"Of course, a parent is wrong — of course, a mother is not a proper judge, compared with a child's greater wisdom, in any affair connected with that child's welfare. I am aware of your high opinion of yourself. I have long known your freedom, from every proper feeling which softens and decorates a woman's mind. Remain

single, Bell, and be the prototype of your great aunt, Miss Christobelle Wetheral; sink like her into insignificant old maidism. But don't let my eyes contemplate you, an excrescence in your family — an incubus upon its glory. All my daughters have married splendidly, and I cannot be encumbered by a stupid daughter, who throws every advantage from her, and considers an admirer an unholy appendage."

Tears flowed silently down her daughter's cheeks. Christobelle could hold no dialogue with a mother, whose ironical manner and determinedly opposed views distressed her, and darkened the prospect of her life. Her silence became a matter of offence.

"If weeping is to accompany your talent for continual and insolent opposition, Miss Wetheral, I will request you to leave me: my own nerves are sufficiently shattered."

Christobelle rose, and quitted the room; Sir John Spottiswoode came towards her from the hall, as she closed the door of the breakfast-room. He did not notice her emotion; he did not even speak, but he gently drew her arm within his own, and led her upon the terrace which commanded the view of the lake. They took one turn in silence, and then Sir John Spot-

tiswoode spoke of his admiration of Lochleven, and gradually drew Christobelle into cheerful conversation. He asked her opinion concerning the morning's plan of amusement. "If she did not prefer riding, he should feel inclined to consider the day just the very thing for a water excursion." Christobelle was very willing to resign herself into Sir John's hands. The conversation of the morning had damped the glow of pleasure, and given a melancholy tinge to her thoughts, which could not be immediately shaken off. She therefore answered slowly—"Yes, anything; let us go upon the water, if you wish it."

Sir John Spottiswoode pressed her arm to his side so slightly, that she could scarcely write it down a pressure, as he replied:

"I will have nothing done without your full concurrence. If you do not feel inclined to go on the water, let the original plan be adopted."

"I believe my tones are rather dismal this morning," she replied, with more cheerfulness; "but I quite approve of your idea. We will certainly row to the Douglas Isle."

Sir John Wetheral accompanied them in their little excursion; and as they glided towards the Isle, the fresh air, the light dip of the oars, and the conversation of her two companions, re-

stored Christobelle's spirit to its usual buoyancy. Sir John Spottiswoode watched the ebb and flow of her countenance, and bent towards her. "This is perfect enchantment. Tell me now why you were so melancholy."

Christobelle shook her head smilingly. "Do not put me in mind of it, but sing me a Swiss air; that air I loved to hear at Wetheral."

"You have remembered it, even among these distant scenes?"

"It has never faded from my recollection. On the contrary, these rocks and mountains brought it still more freshly to memory."

Sir John Spottiswoode instantly sang the Swiss air with spirit, and his voice sounded melodiously on the water, which lay so calmly, so beautifully still: not a breath of air curled a ripple upon its surface. Again and again the song recommenced, and all Christobelle's troubles were forgotten in the delicious harmony. She did not know she sat gazing upon the singer, till Sir John Spottiswoode suddenly paused, and their eyes met: Christobelle was not aware her attention was so exclusively bestowed upon him, till the expression of his glance recalled her thoughts. She turned from him in confusion, and fixed her contemplation

upon the mountains which rose gradually above each other, till their heads were lost in clouds. She looked no more towards Sir John Spottiswoode.

The little party sat conversing some hours on a small pile of stones raised under a tree, which, in former days, constituted the *plaisance* of Lochleven Castle. This spot commanded the rich plain of Kinross, the rocky hills which swelled on either side, and the houses which dotted the plain, and gleamed in the sunshine. They thought of the sufferings of Mary, when she inhabited the now-ruined building under which they reposed, not as a restless Queen of Scots, but as a captive woman, banished to an isle where her eye could only rest upon rocks and water, far from her home and friends.

Sir John Spottiswoode also told of foreign scenes, and compared the beauties of Lochleven with the gigantic lakes of the south. They could not bear comparison; yet Lochleven possessed, in its diminutiveness, every requisite for poetic beauty. It was Lochleven; and Lochleven contained a succession of captivating scenery, delighting to the eye and mind. Many might prefer the imposing immensity of Geneva, of Constance, or of Zurich; but all must admire

Lochleven. He did not see the chamois bounding from cliff to cliff; but the mind loved to repose on the bold yet tranquil scene which he contemplated. He did not dread the avalanche; but the softer landscape pleased an eye, sated with precipices, glaziers, torrents, and cataracts. It was delightful to sit by the side of friends, in the midst of scenery so beautiful, and yet be able to say, "It is in our own land."

Christobelle listened, and forgot Lord Farnborough. Far more attractive to her mind was the manly conversation of Sir John Spottiswoode, than the empty compliments of a new acquaintance. How could she, for an instant, feel disappointment at the thought of being absent from Fairlee when his lordship called?

Their return to the main land was late; it was later still when they reached Fairlee. They had lingered by the way, and every turn presented new objects to admire, and fresh subjects for discussion. The half-hour bell was pealing its tones, and the echo reverberated from rock to rock, as they gained the terrace. This incident produced another pause: Sir John described the effect of the echo among the mountains of Switzerland, and the wild cry of the Switzers. Christobelle had scarcely time

to hurry into her room, and change her dress, before they were summoned into the dining-room. Lady Wetheral did not address her daughter during dinner. She directed her discourse exclusively to her husband, when any subject was intended particularly to attract Christobelle's attention; otherwise, her manners were captivating as ever, when she played the hospitable and agreeable hostess, at the head of her table.

"My dear John, the Duke of Forfar called this morning." Christobelle's colour rose, and her quick eye detected the little emotion. "I was gratified by the call: his Grace looked remarkably well, and Lady Anna Herbert as sprightly as usual. Four years have rolled by, and left their 'flowing hair' unthinned. Lady Anna looks quite as youthful as she did when a '*belle confessed*,' at your mother's balls, Sir John Spottiswoode."

"She was a very fine girl, and an excellent flirt," remarked Sir John. "Charles and Lady Anna were great friends some years ago."

"I was very much pleased with Lord Farnborough," continued Lady Wetheral, addressing her husband, and passing her eyes slightly over Christobelle. "Lord Farnborough accompanied

his party, and I have not seen such a finished gentleman many years."

Sir John Spottiswoode made no remark; and Christobelle was silent. Sir John Wetheral asked if the great boy had grown into a fine-looking youth?

"I set Lord Farnborough down as decidedly handsome at the first glance, my love; but I forgot his beauty in his very finished manners."

Sir John made no further remark, and there was a short pause, till Lady Wetheral resumed—

"Lord Farnborough spoke with polite pleasure of his introduction to my daughter yesterday; and he brought a note from Miss Ponsonby, requesting us to join a party next Tuesday to St. Mungo's Isle. You were included, Sir John, when our friends learned you were at Fairlee."

Sir John Spottiswoode bowed.

"It is to be an early party, and there were sundry messages delivered which my poor head could not contain; but Lord Farnborough will call again with more ample instructions. I told him it was cruel to load my memory with such matter."

"Do the Forfar party continue long at Clan-

moray," said Sir John Spottiswoode, some moments after the subject had dropped.

"I believe so," was Lady Wetheral's reply; "indeed, Lord Farnborough mentioned his own protracted stay, when the rest left for Farnborough Stacy. I forget when *they* depart."

"Perhaps there is attractive metal in Miss Fanny Ponsonby," observed Sir John Wetheral.

"There is attraction somewhere," replied his lady, "for there was a lover's touch in his description of Lochleven, and in his anxiety for the party to St. Mungo's Isle."

"Allow me the pleasure of taking wine with you, Miss Wetheral," said Sir John Spottiswoode, bending forward. The subject again dropped.

The half hour's interregnum after dinner, was passed in lectures on Lady Wetheral's part. The ladies had scarcely entered the drawing-room, when Christobelle's attention was again required upon the subject so painfully argued in the morning.

"I wish to try your narrow capacity once more, Bell, and to ascertain whether you really possess one spark of that wholesome ambition which dignifies a woman of birth."

"Indeed, mamma, I hope so. I would not

for worlds stoop to commit a mean action, or indulge a mean thought. My very greatest ambition is to act like a lady, and, by so doing, meet every one's respect."

"That is all very well, Bell, but that is not exactly my meaning. To be respectable, you must soar. It is vain to content one's-self with grovelling just above the heads of the canaille. The proper ambition is to grasp at high things, and possess them."

"I have no wish for high things, mamma."

"Because your nature is common-place, Bell, because your mind is low set. However you may pique yourself upon your accomplished education, that very education has crippled my hopes, and your own prospects. You will live and die, satisfied with mediocrity."

"But, mamma, what do you mean, and what am I to do to give you satisfaction? I cannot understand you."

"I will explain myself. Bell Are you a girl of such a mean spirit, as to accept a baronet, when a duke's son enters the list of suitors? Answer me—are you so mean-spirited, so mediocre in your wishes, as to content yourself with a man who cannot raise you above your fellows?"

"Certainly not, mamma, if I did not love him."

"Love him! Could you love a man—would you dare to plead attachment to a man, as an excuse for lowering yourself in marriage below your sisters' fortunes? Would *you* meanly creep, while *their* flight has carried them to this world's pinnacle? I hope, I trust, you would not do so, Bell!"

"Whom can you allude to?" exclaimed Christobelle, distressed beyond measure at her mother's words; "tell me at once, I beseech you, what you mean. Do not speak to me in parables."

Lady Wetheral became extremely agitated. She walked to the window, threw open the sash, and closed it again, as she spoke.

"I have said enough to waken your understanding. Any one might comprehend my meaning—any one would know I detested the idea of your marrying Sir John Spottiswoode."

Christobelle looked up in her mother's face with astonishment. She continued with increased nervousness.

"You cannot deceive *me*, Bell. You cannot deny your predilection for that man, which will at once decide the intentions, and end all hopes

of Lord Farnborough. You are determined to pursue your will, and I will act upon my own resolution. The very hour in which you accept Sir John Spottiswoode, shall be the last of your residence with me."

"Good heavens, mamma, I have not a thought of Sir John Spottiswoode, or Sir John Spottiswoode of me! What can have caused such a supposition in your mind?"

"You do not care for him—you *will* not care for him—is that your meaning, Bell?"

"I do not care for any one, half so much as for my own papa, and I hope I shall always prefer him," she exclaimed, energetically.

"Folly, and nonsense!—girl's folly," resumed Lady Wetheral, "by your blushes I might have given you credit for ambition; but your walks and sailing with Sir John Spottiswoode, inclines me to fear you will give yourself to a poor baronet."

"I did not know he was poor, mamma."

"Comparatively speaking with Sir Foster Kerrison, he *is* poor. What is a paltry income of three thousand pounds, compared with the wealthy dukedom of Forfar?"

"Am I to marry the Duke of Forfar?" ex-

claimed Christobelle, starting from her chair in horror.

"Not the present duke, Bell, though he is a remarkably fine man, and not more than sixty years of age. Many young ladies might approve the Duke of Forfar; but I allude to his very handsome, very accomplished mannered son."

Christobelle could have listened to her mother's eulogium with infinite pleasure at an earlier period, and before she had deprecated Sir John Spottiswoode. But her soul rose against persecution. She could not endure to hear her friend lowered, or to be at once commanded not to like a man whom she loved in innocence, and without a thought of future connexion. From that moment, Sir John Spottiswoode became a martyr in her eyes, and Lord Farnborough sank into a secondary personage. Lady Wetheral awaited her daughter's reply some moments, but her mind was too busily employed deciding her feelings.

"You are very thoughtful, Bell. Think well upon my words, and act with becoming spirit."

"I have thought, and I have decided," replied Christobelle, firmly.

"But do not look so ashy pale, my dear Bell; these little struggles are trifles, compared with a long existence of nonentity. I gave up a very

powerful attachment, to please my wise and reflecting mother. I relinquished Captain Blennerhasset for your father, and I found her remarks perfectly just, by the course of events. She implored me to forbear marrying an Irish officer, with little more than his pay, when a prospect arose before me of becoming mistress of Wetheral Castle. She assured my romantic fancy, that Love could not survive the attacks of poverty, and she warned me to avoid the miseries of following my husband into disagreeable quarters, where I must sink into a captain's lady, a title of far less importance than the general's mistress. I followed my dear mother's prudent advice, and broke off my engagement with Blennerhasset."

Christobelle was interested in the fate of her mother's unfortunate lover, and she asked what had become of Captain Blennerhasset?

"He married somebody of distinction," she replied, "and fell at Badajos. His widow and four children are now living upon the bounty of their friends. My mother's counsel was wise, and I was fortunately prevailed upon to act with propriety."

"Poor Captain Blennerhasset!"

"Poverty is always pitiable," resumed Lady

Wetheral. "I consider people equally poor, whose income will not allow them to compete with their neighbours. I should say poor Lady Spottiswoode, if you were the wife of our excellent guest, ..."

"Alverton is a handsome estate," remarked Christobelle.

"Very well for a nobody," replied Lady Wetheral, haughtily, "but a wretched pittance for a Miss Wetheral, who has attracted the notice of Lord Farnborough. I saw his watchful looks towards the door, Bell. I marked his lordship's glances towards the lake, when he heard of your visit to the island; every thing is in your power, if you will but listen to your mother's counsel."

"Do not talk to me of marriage, mamma, I implore you," cried Christobelle, as the gentlemen entered from the dining-room. Sir John Spottiswoode took his seat near her as usual; she thought he looked more benevolent, more interesting than ever. Matrimony never coupled itself with her admiration of Sir John, but to be commanded to approve him less than Lord Farnborough—to consider *him* poor and undesirable, who had improved her better tastes, and increased her store of good! No, that should

never be. Christobelle was too young to wish to marry, too happy and free to think of fetters: but her right hand would forget its cunning, ere she ceased to esteem Sir John Spottiswoode beyond every human being.

"Shall we walk this evening?" he asked, as thoughts passed too rapidly through her mind to allow of speech. Christobelle coloured, and turned mechanically towards her mother. Lady Wetheral saw her emotion.

"My dear child looks fatigued, Sir John. Shall we advise her to be quiet this evening? A long morning upon the water has lessened her bloom."

"One little turn upon the terrace only, Miss Wetheral." Sir John offered his arm.

"My dear Bell, even the terrace will fatigue you," observed her ladyship, with anxiety.

"One turn to watch that sunset, Lady Wetheral! I will bring Miss Wetheral back before fatigue attacks her."

"My dear Bell!....."

"I will not detain her many minutes — *one* turn, my pupil."

Christobelle could not resist that title. She rose, and accompanied Sir John Spottiswoode upon the terrace. One turn was taken, and they

paused to watch the golden beams sink behind the mountains. Another and another was agreed upon, just to watch the pale gleams departing. Was it, indeed, her mother's prohibition which gave so much interest to her companion's remarks? Was it her prohibition which threw a charm over his conversation, and caused Christobelle to linger in his society? She knew not — but it was dark when they returned into the drawing-room, and the coffee had been forgotten. Lady Wetheral's eyes turned upon her daughter with an offended expression, but Christobelle forgot their glance in pleasing retrospections that night. Christobelle dreamed of Sir John Spottiswoode, and their early first days of acquaintance, when Lady Wetheral approved and sought his intimacy, and she had enjoyed it undisturbed, without a reference to Lord Farborough.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Lady Wetheral complained the following morning of her nerves. She assured Sir John Spottiswoode her alarms about her daughter's health induced the attacks, and she hoped Christobelle would not think of quitting Fairlee grounds that day. When that dear girl was long absent, her fears became overpowering, and a frequent recurrence of such disquietude might bring on a serious illness. She hoped Bell would find amusement in the house, and be prevailed upon to forego her long walks. Sir John Spottiswoode should not suffer by her nervous feelings. She was aware her husband admired and sought out points of scenery almost as enthusiastically as Bell, and he would be delighted to attend him in his rides.

Sir John Spottiswoode smiled. "I will also decline leaving the house, if you please. Since

my pupil has suffered by my selfish pleasures, I will dedicate myself to her entertainment—we will sketch the lake from the terrace."

"That would be most pleasant; but I fear my poor nerves are in the way again, my dear Sir John. I do not like to see my daughter bending over her drawing."

"Miss Wetheral shall not bend over her drawing: I will read to you both; I will read the 'Lady of the Lake.'"

"That will be most agreeable—most entertaining," observed her ladyship. "My dear Bell, you are so partial to Sir Walter Scott's poems!"

Yes, Christobelle was a warm admirer of Sir Walter's poetry; but she thought still more of the pleasure she should experience in hearing it read aloud by Sir John Spottiswoode. Christobelle acknowledged "how gratified she would feel, by hearing the 'Lady of the Lake'—that she preferred '*la lecture*' even to a sketch of the bright Lochleven. She would bring her netting, and her father should sit by her in his comfortable chair."

Every thing was arranged, shortly after the conclusion of breakfast, for the reading; but, as the gentlemen returned from their morning visit

to the stables and gardens, Lady Wetheral expressed her satisfaction at the arrangement.

"I have managed to withdraw you from a walk, Bell. I dislike those walks. Your name would soon become coupled with Sir John Spottiswoode, which I will not allow. If Lord Farnborough calls to-day, every thing is in its proper order. Place a chair for the reader, between your father and myself, my love: our ears are older than your youthful members."

"I thought the Clanmoray party called yesterday, mamma?"

"They did so—and yet I have a presentiment that Lord Farnborough will appear again to-day. Remember, Bell, I do not extend my prohibition to Lord Farnborough. You may walk with Lord Farnborough."

"That would give offence to Sir John Spottiswoode, mamma."

"Leave *me* to manage Sir John Spottiswoode, my love."

"I shall not wish to walk; I shall remain at home to-day, if you please, mamma."

"I do not prescribe your hours, my dear Bell. Walk when and where you like, so you are not conspicuous with Sir John Spottiswoode. I warn you in time, that I will listen to no proposal

which does not emanate from Lord Farnborough; and no plea from yourself, which has reference to our present guest. You are warned in time, remember!"

"I should never think of, or hope to attach, Sir John Spottiswoode," Christobelle replied, calmly; "I only wish to be allowed free liberty to enjoy his conversation."

"There is a very homely adage, Bell, which says, 'Prevention is better than a cure.' Lay its meaning to your heart."

Christobelle did not continue the dialogue. She gave her whole attention to her netting, till the gentlemen returned, and till Sir John Spottiswoode commenced his reading: her whole soul was then engrossed in the fate of the fair and gentle Ellen. Gradually her hands relaxed their grasp, as the story proceeded—gradually her eyes turned upon the reader, and her netting fell disregarded upon the carpet. She was listening to the scene where Malcolm hears the praises of Ellen from the lips of Douglas:

> "If a father's partial thought
> O'erweighed her worth and beauty aught—
> Well might the lover's judgment fail
> To balance with a juster scale;
> For with each secret glance he stole,
> The fond enthusiast sent his soul."

The eyes of Sir John Spottiswoode rested upon Christobelle as he spoke these lines, and she felt a pain at her heart before unknown, and now indescribable. Lady Wetheral caught the mutual expression, and was struck by the sudden paleness of her daughter's countenance. She turned to Sir John Spottiswoode.

"You will smile at a lady's nerves, and decide us to be incomprehensible beings; but the continual flow of your voice vibrates upon my nerves in a peculiar manner. I *must* feel unwell, since a voice like your own creates nervousness. I will retire, for a short period, to appeal once more to camphor-julep. My dear Bell will give me her arm."

Sir John Spottiswoode rose in alarm.

"My dear sir, these trifling attacks are becoming less and less frequent. My daughter and myself will leave you and Sir John together. I trust these attacks are not to be often repeated; but we shall meet at luncheon, I hope, quite recovered."

The mother and daughter quitted the sitting-room; but, as they passed through the door, held open by Sir John Spottiswoode, he took Christobelle's hand, and kindly hoped she would not be too ill to enjoy a breeze upon the terrace.

"Oh! yes, this evening I shall truly enjoy the pure air," she replied, withdrawing her hand as they passed on.

"If there is any thing most displeasing to me," observed Lady Wetheral, as they entered her dressing-room, "it is comprised in that familiar action of shaking hands upon every occasion. I beg you will avoid it in future."

"It was merely to express a kind wish, *en passant*," Christobelle remarked, "that Sir John Spottiswoode just touched my hand."

"Familiarity which begins *en passant*, ends in contempt *pour toujours*, Miss Wetheral."

"Would you wish to lie down, mamma, or shall I ring for Mrs. Bevan?" asked her daughter, willing to change the subject.

"Neither, Miss Wetheral. I wish simply to remain here, and, if you please, you shall read to me."

Christobelle continued reading to her mother, who sat reclining in a lounging-chair, till a tap at the door announced Mrs. Bevan in waiting. Her ladyship touched a little silver hand-bell by her side, to indicate to Mrs. Bevan that she might enter. She brought a summons from her master, to beg the ladies would make their appearance.

"Tell Frederick, Mrs. Bevan, to inform your master we will descend when the luncheon is announced: I am very nervous and unwell."

"My lady, I believe my Lord Farnborough is in the drawing-room."

"Oh! very well, Mrs. Bevan, we are coming immediately." Mrs. Bevan vanished. "My dear love, just draw out your beautiful curls; and if you could pass a narrow blue ribbon negligently through your hair, it would give great effect to its jetty abundance. A little more animation in your manner, Bell, and a little less paleness, is to be desired. Yes, that blush has had great effect — now let us proceed, ere it vanishes."

They entered the drawing-room, and Christobelle's eyes first sought Sir John Spottiswoode. He was standing at the window, but he turned towards the ladies, as the little bustle of their entrance reached his ear, and advanced with alacrity. Lady Wetheral held out her hand. "I am much better, my dear Sir John—your countenance asks the question. I have had repose—perfect repose—and I am better. My daughter is my medicine." Her ladyship still held Christobelle's arm, and moved gracefully forward. "My lord, you are the bearer of Miss Pon-

sonby's wishes. My poor memory had parted with the recollection of your message yesterday, before my daughter's return."

Christobelle bowed to Lord Farnborough, and would have apologized for her absence the preceding day, by stating Sir John Spottiswoode's arrival, had not the attention of the latter been fixed upon her. She could perceive that he watched her narrowly, and that knowledge imparted an awkwardness to her manner which she could not shake off. Christobelle stopped abruptly in her speech, and hesitated. Lord Farnborough had greatly the advantage in perfect ease of manner. Christobelle felt her insufficiency, and it caused greater agitation — for what would Sir John Spottiswoode think of her folly?"

Lord Farnborough entered gaily into conversation, and he did not allude to his disappointment, or recur to the events which had passed. He was charged with Miss Ponsonby's complimentary fears lest Christobelle should become a defaulter to St. Mungo's Isle, and her hopes that the party would assemble at Clanmoray, before the aquatic expedition took place. It was hoped that Lady Wetheral would accompany the Fairlee party, and forget her fears of the water.

"You will be under my guidance, Lady Wetheral," continued Lord Farnborough, "and I am an experienced sailor. Ponsonby heads a detachment also, but I particularly request your daughter and yourself will place yourselves under *my* care."

"We will certainly enlist under your banners, Lord Farnborough; we prefer the sailor to the soldier, upon the water," said Lady Wetheral, her countenance lighted up with pleasure, and all her ailments forgotten. "I shall accept, with pleasure, Miss Ponsonby's invitation, and I will *try* to forget my fears."

"I shall ride over on Tuesday, to escort you," resumed Lord Farnborough. "Since you consider yourselves my peculiar care, I shall certainly take charge of you from your own door. Miss Ponsonby declares, if I monopolize the ladies, she will insist upon being attended by the gentlemen. She therefore appropriates Sir John Wetheral and your guest."

"A charmingly novel arrangement," exclaimed Lady Wetheral, delighted to believe that Sir John Spottiswoode would not enter her appointed vessel. "I am amused by the peculiar novelty. Tell me who form your exclusive party?"

"Oh! I have secured Lady Anna and Fanny Ponsonby—Mrs. Ponsonby has declared off altogether—the Greys, and the two Quintens."

"The handsome Quintens?"

"Yes, the handsome, tall Quintens—second only to the incomparable Fanny Ponsonby."

Christobelle thought Lord Farnborough handsome — very handsome, that morning. If Sir John Spottiswoode had not arrived at Fairlee—if Lady Wetheral had not tortured her heart, by *compelling* its obedience — by endeavouring to lower her opinion of the friend she esteemed—if, a thousand ifs — Christobelle had perhaps admired his lordship, and fallen a victim to her mother's wishes. But, now!—a thousand Lord Farnboroughs could not fill up the sum of her preference to the society of Sir John Spottiswoode. Love was a deity unknown, unwished for. She only prayed to pass her existence with her father, and to see sometimes the friend she so greatly venerated.

Lord Farnborough remained some hours at Fairlee; and when Christobelle's confusion, which arose at Sir John Spottiswoode's scrutiny, had subsided, she could also join in the passing conversation. Many complimentary nothings fell from Lord Farnborough's lips, to which she re-

plied with a banter which arose from the collision of their wits—not from a heart gratified by empty verbiage. Christobelle was at rest from reproach; and her spirits rose from their contact with lively observations and sprightly repartee.

Sir John Spottiswoode did not join in the wordy war, but her father smiled in pleased approbation, and often rescued his daughter from the horns of a dilemma. Lady Wetheral's satisfaction lay deep in her heart, but she sat composedly silent, as the brilliant scintillations of wit played round her. It was after the departure of Lord Farnborough, that she spoke her feelings in one concise, but too dangerous, sentence.

"Bell, walk *now* when and where you please, with Sir John Spottiswoode."

Christobelle was again at liberty to walk by the side of her friend—again free to claim his society, without reproachful looks and unkind expressions! How joyfully did she avail herself of the blessed privilege! Her mother smiled at their repeated absence, and expressed no curiosity to learn their subjects of conversation. Christobelle drew fearlessly to the side of Sir John Spottiswoode, or leaned upon his arm with confidence, as they watched the sun's

decline from the terrace. She was the happiest creature breathing, till the day of their engagement to Clanmoray.

And yet Christobelle fancied there were symptoms of reserve on the part of her companion. Conversation became, she thought, less gaily free, less continuous. There were repeated and long pauses, which she could not break, and Sir John Spottiswoode appeared to covet. They sat one morning in their rocky seat, without exchanging a single word, till Sir John suddenly exclaimed,—

"This is, indeed, perfect happiness."

Christobelle smiled.

"We are *silent* adorers of Nature; but our feelings are not the less sincere."

"Powerful admiration is in the heart, not upon the lips," replied her companion, sighing.

"Yet we admired the scene as fervently when we chatted and sang upon the lake," observed Christobelle.

"That was eye-service, Miss Wetheral. The glorious scenery *then* delighted my eye, but had not reached my heart: its effects now are very soothing, yet melancholy."

"Don't let me interrupt your meditations, then," Christobelle replied, with a little feeling

of offended pride, which had never risen in her bosom till that moment. She was ashamed of its existence, but it *would* display itself.

"I have not the sprightly and winning tongue of Lord Farnborough, Miss Wetheral. I cannot be witty and yet feel deeply."

"Lord Farnborough," replied Christobelle, colouring, "was not in my thoughts."

"I spoke unadvisedly, my dear pupil: forgive the stern schoolmaster."

Sir John Spottiswoode held out his hand, and when did Christobelle resist that affectionate title, which recalled his instructions, and their happy days at Wetheral? She gave her own hand with the delight of heart which every one experiences who renews a happy intercourse with half displeased friends. Sir John Spottiswoode held it for some moments; and when it was withdrawn gently from his grasp, they again relapsed into silence. The dressing-bell startled them from their long reverie.

"Oh, that tiresome bell!" exclaimed Christobelle, "how dismally and faithfully it summons one from mental enjoyment to the creature comforts!"

"It is wisely ordered!" replied Sir John Spottiswoode, placing her arm within his own.

"I will tell you why I judge it so, as we climb this steep. We enjoy all things by comparison, and in their variety. Mental pleasures depend upon calm bodily tranquillity; and where the constitution suffers, there is little leisure for the mind to absorb itself in its own reveries. There! you have slipped, and hurt your foot!"

"But the dressing-bell — you have not yet il ustrated your position!" exclaimed Christobelle, in some confusion, as her companion caught her fall, by throwing his arm round her waist, though it was instantly withdrawn.

"I was going to enter upon it as you fell, my argumentative pupil. A calm mind depends upon bodily repose, which demands support, which is effected by food, which is denoted by the dressing-bell to be preparing. Have I not stated it truly and concisely."

"Yes; a perfect 'House that Jack built,' in its tripping measure. You will rival Lord Farnborough."

"What is the meaning of this extraordinary arrangement, that all the ladies are to sail in one vessel, Miss Wetheral?"

"Miss Ponsonby's whim, I believe. I look forward with pleasure to our party to-morrow."

"Do you?"

Yes: I feel light as the heather-bell, and
ready to aim poisoned arrows at Lord
borough. Will it amuse you?"
Not particularly."
You do not like Lord Farnborough?"
I have no reason to feel entertainment in
ordship's society. I am not an admirer of
onversation."
ristobelle thought Sir John Spottiswoode
e a little bitterly of poor Lord Farnborough,
t did not surprise her. Doubtless, Mr. Be-
's supposed injury had taken effect upon
riend's mind, and prejudiced him against
ordship. Christobelle did not, however,
nue a subject in itself uninteresting. Lord
borough had no charm for her; she only
amused by his sprightly powers. While
ather and Sir John Spottiswoode were near,
tobelle's spirits ever rose into gaiety: she
d be gaiety itself during the water excur-
and Sir John would be gay too, only
oke so deprecatingly of the affair. They
ot linger on the terrace. Christobelle had
time to promise her companion that the
ng should be devoted to music, and she
ed to her room. The second bell sounded
he could reach the drawing-room.

The following morning rose in sunny smiles. A mist had cleared away, leaving the sparkling waters of the lake bright and clear; and Christobelle's spirits were unusually high at the prospect of her happy day of pleasurable anticipation. She spoke in metaphor, and thought in rhyme; but her astonishment was great, in beholding the coolness of Sir John Spottiswoode's manner, and viewing the gravity of his countenance at breakfast. Christobelle's most lively sallies passed perfectly unnoticed and unheeded. She could not win one smile, or obtain one remark from her friend. His eye appeared heavy, and Christobelle fancied he must suffer from concealed illness, otherwise he would have caught the infection of her spirits. The thought of Sir John Spottiswoode suffering sobered her vivacity. She became grave, and gradually even sad, to witness his dejection. Christobelle approached him when they rose from the breakfast-table; her mother had quitted the breakfast-room, and she feared no misconstruction of her anxiety.

"I know you are ill. I am sure you are unfit to join a party full of mirth."

"I believe I am unequal to this morning's

gaiety; certainly quite unfitted for mirth," was the dejected answer.

"How very annoying that it should take place to-day; or how provoking that you should ever be ill! Did you rise unwell?"

"No; I was perfectly well when I entered the breakfast-room; but a few turns on the terrace with Lady Wetheral, before you appeared, has caused a head and heart ache. I cannot remain at Fairlee solitary, but I am too ill to mix in a party of pleasure."

"I wish we were both going in our own boat, to our own island, to be quiet," Christobelle exclaimed. "I do not enjoy large parties when my friends are ill."

"You will not observe my sickness of heart, Miss Wetheral. You will be gaily engaged."

"Not if you are ill."

Christobelle was not aware of the compliment conveyed in her observation. She spoke from her heart simply and sincerely, without considering its flattering tendency. Sir John Spottiswoode caught her hand, and released it again suddenly. He turned abruptly away.

"Do not speak so recklessly, so heartlessly, I beseech you!"

"I never was suspected of heartlessness, Sir John Spottiswoode!"

Christobelle also turned away, for proud tears rose at the unexpected attack. She was quitting the room.

"Stay one moment, and say you forgive me," he cried with energy. "Forgive me, Miss Wetheral—forgive me, my generous pupil!"

Christobelle turned at the last expression, and her emotion was apparent, for he caught her in his arms.

"I cannot support this sight! What right had I to presume to give pain! What right had I to breathe a harsh expression towards a creature all heart, and all nobleness!"

"I am not angry," she replied, withdrawing from his embrace—"I am not angry, Sir John Spottiswoode; only I do not deserve the appellation of heartless. I spoke in sincerity and truth."

"I know you did. I was wrong to speak as I did—forgive me!"

"I do forgive you," she answered, smiling, and another long pressure of the hand attested their reconciliation.

"Calm a penitent spirit by a stroll on the terrace, and talk to me, that I may forget my

fault and its cause. Let me hear your voice again, and let me hear it till Lord Farnborough arrives."

The friends walked nearly an hour together. Christobelle's spirits were again elevated, and she chatted with renewed vivacity. Sir John Spottiswoode walked smilingly by her side, listening to her anticipations of his illness dispersing in the fresh air of Lochleven; but he was not himself. He replied to her remarks, and lent his powers in playful conversation; but they were not *given*. He often sighed, and repeatedly compelled his companion to bespeak his attention.

"You tell me to chat, and your mind is far away," she said, at last, weary with receiving no reply.

"But I have not lost a word. I hear you with the most vivid attention, because you will not long honour me."

"Why so, I pray you, gentle coz?"

"You will be engrossed by Lord Farnborough!"

"That, then, will be your own fault!"

He looked earnestly in Christobelle's face, and shook his head.

"Say it once more, my pupil."

"It will be your own fault, if *any one* engrosses my attention. Why should I be inattentive to my naughty schoolmaster?"

Lord Farnborough bounded from the drawing-room window upon the terrace, and advanced towards them. Christobelle felt her companion's arm relax; she looked reproachingly towards him.

"You wish already to get rid of your poor pupil?"

"Never, never!" was the subdued reply; but Lord Farnborough stood before them.

"You are ready, I see. Is not this a glorious day? Clanmoray is in a proper bustle, and the lake never looked so beautiful. Miss Ponsonby declares she will be the 'Lady of the Lake,' and dress in costume as you do, Miss Wetheral. She hopes some 'Malcolm' of Lochleven will start forth and woo her, but she rather despairs of such good fortune. Malcolm will be attracted elsewhere."

A low bow from his lordship pointed the compliment, and Christobelle curtseyed to its meaning. Sir John Spottiswoode would not enter into the unmeaning dialogue which succeeded: he pertinaciously avoided even lending a smile to Lord Farnborough. How deeply he resented, in Christobelle's eyes, the offence offered to his friend Beverly!

It was a beautiful drive to Clanmoray. Lady Wetheral, forgetful of her long confinement—her nervous feelings—and the painful remembrance of Clara's death, chatted through the carriage-window with Lord Farnborough, as gaily and as sportively as ever. Christobelle amused herself with rallying Sir John Spottiswoode upon his illness, which she assured him was affected, to try the sympathy of his friends. He rebutted the idea with excellent good humour, and they entered the grounds of General Ponsonby in most merry mood.

Two or three groupes were seated in picturesque attitudes, listening to Captain Ponsonby, who struck a guitar with great spirit, and amused the company with Spanish Boleros and Moorish songs. The Wetherals' arrival was the signal to embark; and, in the confusion of introductions, reception, compliments, decisions upon the fit and unfit, and Miss Ponsonby's determination to be the Lady of the Lake, Christobelle found herself descending the wooded hill which sloped to the waters' edge, escorted by Lord Farnborough and Mr. Ponsonby. Lady Wetheral followed closely upon her daughter's steps, leaning upon the arm of the Duke of Forfar. Christobelle cast lingering looks at the

groupe which dotted the pathway, but she could not distinguish the figure of Sir John Spottiswoode.

"Well, we look neat, however," said Mr. Ponsonby, cracking a whip, which never departed from his right hand.

"Is my father near, Mr. Ponsonby?" Christobelle asked, anxiously. She was sure Sir John Spottiswoode would be near *him*, and her heart wished to ascertain his movements. She dared not appear interested in the whereabout of her "tutor," to attract notice. Mr. Ponsonby cracked his whip, and looked behind him.

"Sir John Wetheral and your friend are escorting my sisters. Do observe the pretty effect of the groupe descending the glen."

They turned to admire the picturesque figures which adorned the woody scene. Lady Wetheral also lingered with his Grace of Forfar, to gaze upon their effect.

"These scenes are not to be found in Shropshire," observed his Grace. "The Wrekin lying upon the plain, like a whale in a dish, will be tame work when we can remember Lochleven."

"And yet I sometimes sigh for the scenes I have quitted," said her ladyship. "I confess I love the busy hum of man, and Lochleven is

dreary in the winter months. I wish I could persuade my daughter she is dull at Fairlee."

"Miss Wetheral loves the grand seclusion of Lochleven, because her taste has not been vitiated by society."

"My daughter is wedded to calm life, and loves no agitation beyond the ruffled lake. I believe her spirit would pine in the gay world."

"So much the better, my good lady; her young mind is uncontaminated by the arts of a worldly life."

"My endeavour is to preserve its purity, and watch over its happiness," replied her ladyship, sighing.

At this moment the whole party became united again. Sir John Spottiswoode quitted Miss Fanny Ponsonby, and approached Christobelle. Lady Wetheral perceived the movement, and she turned hastily round.

"My dear child, you are tired, you look pale. My lord, you have outwalked even your 'genius of the Lake.'"

Lord Farnborough offered his arm, with many polite regrets. Christobelle declined it, courteously. She was quite equal to the walk;—she felt no fatigues.

"Oblige me, my dear child,

theral, anxiously; "I cannot be satisfied unless you accept his lordship's assistance. My dear girl, make me happy."

Christobelle could hesitate no longer. All eyes were upon her; she was actually in the way, and a remark from his Grace confused her.

"My dear young lady, you stand there, turning all the young men's heads. Harry, take away your prize, for we are at fault till you proceed."

Christobelle was led away, accordingly; and she saw no more of Sir John Spottiswoode, till they gained the shore of the lake. He was walking still with Miss Fanny Ponsonby, when she beheld him again. He was apparently explaining something to her comprehension, for she was leaning upon his arm, and he was pointing to the peak of Cona. Was he quoting Ossian to the beautiful Fanny Ponsonby, regardless of the party, and of the friend who would have listened so gladly? Did he mean to become the partner of Fanny Ponsonby, when he told her, in their early walk, that he should hear her own voice only on the terrace?—when he told her, *she* would be appropriated by Lord Farnborough? A pang of jealousy pierced her heart at the moment, indescribably bitter; it was a pang

so sudden, so tinctured with despair, that she closed her eyes, and pressed her hand tightly upon her heart. The movement attracted the notice of Lord Farnborough.

"I fear you are ill, indeed, Miss Wetheral. I am sure you have found the descent very fatiguing."

"I *am* rather ill," exclaimed Christobelle, still keeping her eyes closed. She could not endure the light, or the figures which flitted before her. She felt extremely giddy; so much so, she was apprehensive of falling. An exclamation from her companion caught the ear of Lady Wetheral, who was immediately at her daughter's side. Christobelle was placed upon a bank, and she leaned against her mother's shoulder. She waved away the gentlemen.

"Let no one come near me, mamma. Let no one speak to me, just now."

The duke and his lordship politely retreated. Lady Wetheral bestowed her sweetest smile upon her daughter, but it was not seen; and it would have added only to Christobelle's disquiet, if it had met her eye. Her ladyship was very soothing.

"No one shall distress you, Bell; but if, as I suspect, Lord Farnborough has spoken to you rather warmly, you must accustom yourself to

this sort of thing. Only silly girls are overpowered by a love-speech or two ;— do collect yourself, my love, and avoid attracting notice. This is all as it should be, but collect yourself."

" Lord Farnborough has not—" Christobelle could not proceed : she felt gasping for breath.

" Of course not, my dear Bell. A symphony precedes an air — every thing will steal on in proper order. Rouse yourself. Your father is coming to us—do not appear girlish."

Her father's presence and touch revived the spirit of Christobelle. She rose, and leaned upon his arm ; she felt better when her father was near her. She entreated to be allowed to walk with *him*—to be with him on the water and on land. She should be quite well and happy, quite composed, if she walked only with *him*—with her father.

" My dear Bell, do not shock me by any display of folly. Lord Farnborough is lingering near us—resume his assistance, and let us rejoin the company. We are detaining them on the shore." Lady Wetheral rose, as she spoke, with great composure, but a smile of pleasure lurked beneath her grave and calm expression of countenance. How greatly was she mistaken in the cause of her daughter's emotion !

"You shall be my companion, Chrystal," said her father, drawing his daughter's arm within his, "and I will take charge of you. We will not delay the party."

This was not quite in the fitness of things. Her ladyship was discomposed.

"But, my love, Lord Farnborough will have every reason to feel offended: it wears a very extraordinary appearance that his lordship should be so suddenly deserted. My dear Bell, you cannot altogether desert your companion."

"A father's care will not give umbrage to any gentleman, Gertrude. I will attend to my daughter, since she requests it. No one will plead desertion when I am in question."

This step discomposed her ladyship's "arrangements," but impediments only roused her mind, and found employment for her energies. All the resources of her genius were brought into full operation by this unfortunate occurrence; and never, in Christobelle's earliest days, did she remember her mother more present to herself — more fitted to contend with the exigences of the moment. Lord Farnborough joined them as they proceeded towards the lake. Miss Ponsonby flew towards Christobelle, at the same moment.

"My dear, I would not intrude while you were under such proper protection, but I hope you are recovered. What was it?—a little megrim?"

"We have forgotten its proper designation, and even its existence," replied Lady Wetheral, smilingly; "I am only anxious my daughter should not undertake too much fatigue. I fear her efforts in trying to promote amusement for our guest, Sir John Spottiswoode, have overcome her strength."

"Miss Wetheral shall not suffer from efforts of any kind this morning. My lord, take possession of your fair cargo, but reserve the seat of honour for our young friend."

Christobelle clung to her father's arm, but Miss Ponsonby did not observe the movement.

"Sir John Wetheral, you are my property; you must relinquish your fair daughter."

"Are we not admissable together, Miss Ponsonby?"

"I will have no rival—yes, I change my mind; I will have Miss Wetheral for my Eucharis, and be myself Calypso, instead of Ellen Douglas. Where shall I find a Telemachus?"

"Sir John Spottiswoode," answered Lord Farnborough.

"No, I hate a flirting Telemachus—he is saying sugared sentences to Fanny."

"Mortimer Grey," rejoined his lordship.

"Nonsense, Telemachus with a hare-lip?—now, out upon you! Miss Wetheral, you are mine, and you are Eucharis. I steal you from my lord."

"I cannot resign my fair assignment—racks and tortures shall not extort my consent," replied Lord Farnborough.

Captain Ponsonby came up.

"What are we waiting for? Your boat is filling, Mary—we must not delay. Miss Wetheral, are you of our party? allow me to lead you to the boat."

"Miss Wetheral is mine," cried Lord Farnborough, "and I give her to no mortal."

"It is a freight worth contending for, Farnborough: state your claims."

"The lady's own fair word, Ponsonby."

"I will hear it from her own lips. Miss Wetheral, Genius of the Lake, as they truly style you...."

"I dispute the title," exclaimed Miss Ponsonby. "I have also adopted the costume, and I choose to share the distinction."

"Unfortunate Mary!—name fatal to peace

upon Lochleven, be still. Does Miss Wetheral consign herself wholly and solely to Lord Farnborough?"

"I wish to go with my father," eagerly replied Christobelle.

Lord Farnborough bowed proudly and coldly. Captain Ponsonby waved his hat in the air.

"Hurrah for Miss Wetheral and independence! For once, my lord, you are refused—checked in your high careering. Miss Wetheral, will you give your fair hand to a portionless son?"

Captain Ponsonby held out his arm to escort her to his vessel, but Christobelle's hand was taken gently yet firmly by her mother.

"My dear daughter thanks you, gentlemen, for your polite and amusingly-agreeable knight-errantry. Captain Ponsonby, however, is only unsuccessful from being too late. I believe honour is a treasure too delicate to endure a breath of reproach, and we are pledged to my Lord Farnborough."

"Then, 'soft ideas fly,'" said Captain Ponsonby, laying his hand upon his heart.

"'See our oars with feathered spray,'" exclaimed Miss Ponsonby. "We must stay here no longer. I must not be Calypso — fair Eucharis is taken from me. I believe I had better remain only Mary Ponsonby."

"Your sound judgment soon crushes imagination," cried her brother. "As Mary Ponsonby, you are a good-tempered, noisy kind of girl — but Calypso, or Ellen Douglas, would prove a failure."

"No lack of mentor, however," observed Miss Ponsonby, as she nodded her adieus, and took possession of Sir John Wetheral's arm. Captain Ponsonby called after her.

"Mary, I am going to take charge of Lady Wetheral. Tell Mortimer Grey, to take my place."

"But your party will lose such a dominant spirit, my dear Captain Ponsonby," said her ladyship, as Miss Ponsonby waved her hand, in token of assent.

"Disappointment is the lot of mortality," replied Captain Ponsonby, gaily — "I cannot divide myself into two, and my heart is with *you*."

The party was soon launched upon the lake. Captain Ponsonby insisted upon taking his station between Lady Wetheral and her daughter, and his gay spirits almost whiled Christobelle into cheerfulness. She saw Sir John Spottiswoode enter the first boat with Miss Fanny Ponsonby,

but he never turned to cast a glance towards Christobelle — never once came forward to say he hoped she was well and happy. Her heart swelled with sorrow so poignant, that she heeded not Lord Farnborough's anxious arrangements to make her comfortable — his efforts to secure her from the breeze which rose upon the water. She heeded nothing — cared for nothing. Miss Fanny Ponsonby might consider the excursion a party of deep delight, and Lochleven might be to her a remembrance of pleasurable things—but Christobelle felt the whole affair a mockery. Her mother endeavoured to arouse her faculties.

"My love, Lord Farnborough has spoken twice—his lordship hopes you feel no inconvenience from the sun?"

"Thank you, I am very comfortable."

"My dear Bell, you are not aware Lord Farnborough has placed his cloak under your feet."

"Thank you, my lord."

"For Heaven's sake," whispered her ladyship, "throw off the girl, and be a woman of dignified, composed manners."

"I wish I was any thing but what I am, mamma."

"Nonsense; not one of your sisters acted so

girlishly. I beg you will consider my shocked feelings."

Christobelle did make an effort to shake off the bonds which seemed to bind her spirits with links of iron. She turned from the contemplation of Sir John Spottiswoode and Fanny Ponsonby, but they rose before her like the undying Hydra. She saw them, in imagination, engaged in agreeable conversation—the beautiful eyes of Fanny Ponsonby fixed upon her companion's face, and her mind informed by his remarks. Christobelle saw him, in fancy, fascinated by her loveliness—eager to please—absorbed—forgetful of their own pleasant walks together—their readings—their long and happy pauses on the terrace, watching the last beams of the summer sun. She started with terror.

"My dear Bell, you are not alarmed?" exclaimed her mother. "Lord Farnborough is kind enough to take the helm."

Captain Ponsonby smiled. "What! the Genius of the Lake alarmed upon her own element? Forbid it, storms and clouds!"

"Miss Wetheral, you would feel more undisturbed if you were at my *left* hand," whispered Lord Farnborough.

"Indeed, Miss Wetheral would deceive her-

self, if she looked for rest near *you*, Farnborough: I will not part with my supporters. Miss Wetheral, do not be inveigled away from me. No whispering, unless it is allowed to all, if you please."

"You were pointing north this morning, Ponsonby; and now the wind sits easterly."

> "East, west—alas! I care not whither,
> So thou art safe, and I with thee!"

exclaimed Captain Ponsonby, turning towards Christobelle, with a smile.

Lord Farnborough became silent and sullen. A deep gloom spread over his handsome face, and its bland expression faded. Lord Farnborough wore a countenance, which Christobelle could never have recognised as the agreeable set of features which first pleased her at Lochleven. His lordship turned with indignant pride from his friend, and gave his attention to the Miss Quintins.

"Bell!" whispered Lady Wetheral, as Captain Ponsonby again stooped forward, to adjust his cloak, "you will lose him."

"Lose him!" thought Christobelle — "yes, I have lost him — for is he not uttering 'sugared sentences' to Fanny Ponsonby?—and is he not regardless of his old acquaintance? How easy

o sit in happy, careless tranquillity, when
oud veils our hopes! How happy was I,
he Clanmoray party broke through the
ion of Fairlee, and brought a Fanny Pon-
· between me and my peace! How happy
in my freedom, roving amid the groves of
e, before Sir John Spottiswoode arrived, to
me the glow of friendship, and then to
raw its light!" Ill, unhappy, and indif-
t to the scenery, which was her former
t of devotion, Christobelle heeded not the
ı silence of Lord Farnborough, or the fears
r mother. The little attention she could
ı from the conjurations of her wretched
, Christobelle gave to the gay and kind-
ed Ponsonby.

CHAPTEI

" Miss Wetheral," s
" when I quitted Clanm
never dreamed of a fair
" Six years ago I was
Ponsonby."
" Even so. You te
and tease our hearts in
you have shot from you
of this lake, and whe
rest ?"
" You have been so
tain Ponsonby, and ha

"The Irish ladies possibly guessed your character, Captain Ponsonby, as it appears to have been a general answer. They knew you were either in jest, or sarcastic."

"Upon my honour, you are wrong. I am sincere in word and deed. I am neither fair nor false, the motto of some of my neighbours. Don't look this way, Farnborough."

"Miss Wetheral," said his lordship, "do not believe half you hear from Ponsonby's lips."

"It hit my lord hard, you perceive, Miss Wetheral."

"My friend Ponsonby is a rover—sans eyes, sans heart, sans every thing, Miss Wetheral."

"Excellent—ha, ha!" laughed Captain Ponsonby. "I can disprove the charge, Miss Wetheral. I was in love three whole days, once, at Castlebar."

"And why so speedy a cure?" Christobelle demanded.

"The lady kept silence three days," he replied, "but, on the fourth morning, the charm dissolved, for she spoke."

"What could she have spoken, to break a spell so powerful, Captain Ponsonby?"

"I met the lady in a pouring rain, and, hough I had not been introduced to her, we

had met often, and were acquainted by name and sight. I offered her my escort and my umbrella. 'Ah, now, Captain Ponsonby, there's rason in what you say, and I'll be obleeged to you'—was her good-humoured reply. I could bear the brogue tolerably, Miss Wetheral, for six months' residence had enured me to its twang; but I could not away with the perfect nonchalance with which she exhibited a pair of enormous ancles, and appealed to me upon their use. 'Ah now, Captain Ponsonby, if I've got no understanding above, there's plenty below, and I'll be charged for two pair of legs through the penny turnpikes.' Farewell the glowing complexion and bright eyes of my love!—I never more gazed upon Miss M'Nab."

"Was that your *only* enlargement of heart, Captain Ponsonby?"

"Some few relapses there might have been, but none of any consideration. Miss M'Nab was the most serious love."

"You are difficult to please."

"No, I think not; but I desire to find a sufficiently lovely woman, with sweetness of temper, and delicacy of manners, to love with constancy. If I ever love sincerely, it will be my life-strings—the very breath of my life."

"Then be very cautious, Captain Ponsonby," said Christobelle, with a feeling of painful interest. She felt how sorrowful were the disappointments of friendship. What would the pangs of unrequited affection be?

"Will you be my guardian angel, and watch over me, Miss Wetheral?"

"I cannot undertake such a momentous charge," she replied. Lord Farnborough watched the conversation in gloomy silence, and conversed no more with Miss Quintin. Lady Wetheral was gratified by the expression of jealousy which darkened his lordship's fine face, for, during the little bustle of debarkation, she smiled, and hastily whispered—"Christobelle, very well managed, my love; a little jealousy is useful, but beware of giving *offence*."

"Mamma, you are quite mistaken, indeed you are."

"Nonsense, Bell; I am keenly watching and deciding." Lord Farnborough offered his hand to assist her transit at that moment, and the subject was of course dropped. Captain Ponsonby offered his hand to Miss Wetheral, and they followed in succession: he placed her arm within his own, as they touched the shore of the

little island. "Mind, you belong to me, Miss Wetheral; I shall not relinquish you now."

Lord Farnborough consigned Lady Wetheral to his father's care, and immediately returned. His lordship appeared offended at the disposition of things.

"Miss Wetheral, I am deputed by Lady Wetheral to bring you to her: allow me—" Lord Farnborough put forth his arm. Captain Ponsonby interfered.

"No one takes my guardian angel from me. I will take charge of Miss Wetheral with equal care. Miss Wetheral is mine."

"My claim began earlier, Ponsonby," remarked his lordship, with a look of fierceness.

"I will fight for every inch of mine. My good fellow, the Quintins are unattended."

"My delegated place is by the side of Miss Wetheral." Lord Farnborough threw a look of defiance at her companion, which terrified Christobelle. "Oh, pray take me to my father, Captain Ponsonby," she cried; "pray let me walk with my father."

"You shall be obeyed." Captain Ponsonby drew her among the group, who were deciding the plan of refreshment, or arranging their dress, and gave her into her father's care; but Chris-

tobelle still dreaded the looks of Lord Farnborough. She did not withdraw her arm from Captain Ponsonby's support: he smiled.

"You *are* my guardian angel, after all. I see your fears, and, while they operate to my advantage, I hope they will continue. How delightful it is to be the object of a woman's tender care! every thing is so kindly and silently done."

"I do not like Lord Farnborough's looks, Captain Ponsonby."

"Nor I, at all. I am very much alarmed, and I beg you will keep near me." Christobelle laughed.

"What are you laughing at?"

Lady Wetheral approached, leaning on the arm of his Grace; and Lord Farnborough also came up. Captain Ponsonby affected to tremble, and assured Christobelle, if she quitted his protection, he should be a lifeless corpse. He could not bear the lightning of Lord Farnborough's eye, or the thunder of his angry voice, at being deprived of his prey. He thought they had better contemplate the ruins of the little chapel, while the party were quarrelling about the dinner-tables. Sir John Wetheral was willing to move, and Christobelle also was anxious to leave the spot where Sir John Spottiswoode stood

pertinaciously by the side of Fanny Ponsonby. Sickness of heart came over her, and she turned from the scene.

Lochleven crowded all its beauties into the panorama viewed from St. Mungo's Isle, but Christobelle gazed upon them with vacancy: her eye could not distinguish, and her mind would not relish them. She sat upon a low, ruined wall, in utter listlessness; and, in silence, listened to Captain Ponsonby's statement of the scenes which had taken place on the spot where they rested, when it had been the sepulchre of the clans of Glencoe and Lochaber. Christobelle's adoration of ancient legends was sunk in apathy. She dared not turn her head, lest the fearful forms of Fanny Ponsonby and her companion should startle her sight. She gazed on the heights, without perceiving their beautiful outline. She listened to Captain Ponsonby, without the power of retaining his words. A summons to the rural dinner alone roused her spirits and energy.

"Bell, my love, I have preserved a seat for you, near *me*," said Lady Wetheral, holding out her hand—"Come to me, my love; you have played truant."

Captain Ponsonby seated Christobelle, and

prepared to take possession of an empty chair on her left hand, but Lady Wetheral smilingly interfered—

"My dear Captain Ponsonby, I believe your seat belongs to another, but probably we can make room for you. Ah! the benches interfere so; but where will you find a seat? Spottiswoode, is there not a vacant seat near you?"

"Do not disturb yourself, Lady Wetheral. I am perfectly satisfied with my present quarters; and when a turn out is beaten, I shall take a sentinel's place."

Captain Ponsonby accordingly seated himself, and devoted his time and attention to the wants of Christobelle, till Lord Farnborough joined them, with a cold fowl upon his silver fork.

"I have been my rounds for a supply, and can only gain one recruit, Lady Wetheral, a fowl screened from observation by a bed of parsley. Ponsonby, you'll excuse my resumption of a seat which is mine by right of conquest."

"I only held it in fear and trembling, Farnborough. I relinquish my seat with regret; but if I must, I must. Miss Wetheral, pity my sorrow, and admire my resolution." Captain

Ponsonby rose, and stationed himself behind her chair.

"My dear fellow, there are two seats at the bottom of the table for you," said Lord Farnborough.

"I am very happy in my present situation," replied Captain Ponsonby; "I am attending upon Miss Wetheral."

"But the Greys are quite by themselves, Ponsonby; do go down, and offer your services there."

"Miss Wetheral, you are wishing for a slice of cold turkey; I saw you contemplating it," observed Captain Ponsonby, who took no notice of his friend's speech. "I fly for it."

"I wish Ponsonby would attend to the Greys," said his lordship, as Captain Ponsonby quitted his station. "I shall be most happy to attend upon you and Miss Quintin."

The eyes of Christobelle were riveted in the direction of the turkey, as Captain Ponsonby remarked; for there sat Sir John Spottiswoode, and Fanny Ponsonby was at his side: she tried to withdraw her eyes, but they were fixed by leaden weights, and she gazed on. She saw Sir John Spottiswoode turn to ask Captain Ponsonby whom he should assist to a slice of the

breast; and when Miss Wetheral's name was mentioned, he did not look towards her; he turned and spoke to Fanny Ponsonby. Christobelle would not allow the tears to rush from their fountains, or a sigh to escape from her heart, however pained were her feelings. She only resolved never again to walk as she had done with Sir John Spottiswoode, never again to feel for him those kind and friendly sentiments which he knew not how to appreciate. Captain Ponsonby returned laughing from his mission.

"I wish you could hear Fanny and your handsome friend, Miss Wetheral. They are trying which shall make the most glaring compliment to each other. I left your friend talking about the heart of a lover, which made Fanny grave. Do look at her, now." Christobelle glanced towards his sister; her sprightly countenance had faded into deep attention, as Sir John Spottiswoode spoke earnestly; her glowing complexion had changed its bloom, and was become pale. Christobelle would have given worlds to have been acquainted with their subject.

"Ponsonby, you are devilish rude; no one has taken wine with the Greys," exclaimed Lord

Farnborough, as his friend resumed his station behind the chair of Christobelle.

"Ponsonby," cried Mr. Grey, "are you under orders there, that you stand sentinel over Miss Wetheral?"

"I wish the guard was relieved, Grey," said Lord Farnborough. "Beg your sisters to send a deputation to Ponsonby."

"They would prefer your lordship," answered Mr. Grey. "I speak in their names, because they decline the publicity of confession."

Lord Farnborough's countenance again became gloomy, but he made no reply to Mr. Grey. His lordship turned to Christobelle.

"Miss Wetheral, allow me the pleasure of drinking wine with you."

Christobelle was happy to do so, and by that action she gratified her mother, who sat by her, proudly happy to witness his lordship's vexation at the conduct of Captain Ponsonby. Every one appeared happy but Christobelle: she saw every face decked with smiles, and each person appeared contented with the merriment of the scene. She alone sat ill at ease, and received no satisfaction in the attentions of Lord Farnborough and his friend. She wished to be silent and alone: she wished to think over the

events of the morning, and reckon with her heart. She wished to ascertain if her disquietude arose from unrequited friendship, or whether she indeed loved Sir John Spottiswoode. The noble friendships which Christobelle had contemplated in history, teemed with grand and inspiring actions, but she read not of eyes turned away from the object, or misery created through jealous misgivings. If she loved Sir John Spottiswoode, what would become of her, should another engross his attention and his heart? While she was lingering with him among the cliffs of the Lochleven, all was so tranquil, so happy, so calmly and fearlessly happy! Why was it not so with her in this gay group?

Christobelle was lost to all sound, till a general move was made. The tables were abandoned to the attendants, and the party retired to the extremity of the little island, to amuse themselves till the boats were again loaded with the spoil of the entertainment. Christobelle was attended by Lord Farnborough and Captain Ponsonby, who appeared tacitly determined to struggle for her attention, and annoy each other.

"Miss Wetheral," said his lordship, "you will honour me by accepting my arm *now*."

"Miss Wetheral cannot desert her old com-

panion," remarked Captain Ponsonby, again stepping forward and taking her hand; but Christobelle withdrew it.

"I should like to understand your claims to Miss Wetheral's notice, Ponsonby."

"Never mind, my good fellow. A lady possesses her own right to select and approve."

"Am I to understand, Miss Wetheral, that Captain Ponsonby is selected by you?"

Lord Farnborough spoke with a bitter sneer, and stood before Christobelle with a raised complexion, awaiting her answer. She was fearful of unpleasant scenes; she wished to avoid notice: she could only decide not to receive assistance from either gentlemen. They however walked on either side of her, and the trio silently mixed among the retiring group. Sir John Wetheral relieved his daughter's perilous situation by his approach. Lord Farnborough might conceal much beneath the restraint of polished society; but his temper was strongly irritable; it glistened in his eye, and fired his countenance, whenever Captain Ponsonby addressed Christobelle. The company formed into little parties, on a green bank which swelled towards the water's edge; and, by some unseen chance, Christobelle was grouped in the

little knot which contained Sir John Spottiswoode. Their eyes had not met since they quitted Clanmoray. Captain Ponsonby and his guest were crouched at her feet, her father sat beside her, and Mr. Grey, with the Miss Ponsonbys, completed the number. The rest of the party sat only a few paces apart, but they were engaged in different subjects of conversation, and did not unite with them.

Captain Ponsonby requested his sister Fanny to enlighten the company upon the interesting conversation which had taken place between herself and her companion at dinner.

"It is vain to say," he continued, "that the subject is forgotten, for I left you discoursing upon a lover's heart; and your face, Fanny, was so full of interest, I was obliged to bespeak Miss Wetheral's attention."

Fanny Ponsonby coloured, but disclaimed any peculiar interest in the subject. Her eyes sought the ground, and Christobelle fancied they filled with tears. Her sister begged to be heard a few moments upon the subject. She was rather inspired by the dinner, the party, and the beautiful scenery, and she ventured to think she could define a lover's heart, if her audience were inclined to listen.

"Silence in the court!" exclaimed Lord Farnborough. "The deponent speaks."

"A lover's heart," resumed Miss Ponsonby, waving her hand, "is ennobled by affection, grand in its conceptions—"

"There you are out, Mary," cried her brother; "on the very threshold you have stumbled. What is a more jealous, narrowed, dull, complaining concern than love, and a lover's heart? Can any thing be more disturbing, distrustful, and moody, or more capricious?"

"Speak on, Arthur; I know very little about the matter, I believe, while your long absence has doubtless taught you knowledge," cried Miss Ponsonby.

"Does not love create suspicion?" — Christobelle cast her eyes involuntarily towards Sir John Spottiswoode, and met his fixed, melancholy look. His eye was instantly withdrawn.

"Does not love create melancholy?" continued Captain Ponsonby, turning to Christobelle, "does it not produce the desire to please, while it restrains the ability, Farnborough? Does it not bow down the head, and make pale the cheek, Fanny?"

Fanny Ponsonby started at her brother's address, but she smiled good-humouredly at the

question. Her head had bent forward, and her attention was earnestly given to the definition of the lover's heart. Her attitude had attracted the notice of her lively brother, and drawn down his remark, but its purport was received as gently, as its intention to give offence was innonocent. Not so Lord Farnborough. He rose proudly from the humble position he had assumed, and retired to the group detached from his party. Captain Ponsonby continued his remarks, while a satisfied smile played on his lips.

"Altogether, love deforms and beautifies; it makes the humble and silent man talkative; and it causes the violent man to throw off the mask which veils his fiery spirit. The less we know of the subtle deity, the happier we are in freedom of heart and spirit; but once receive him to your bosom, and adieu for ever to the calm pleasures of life."

"I thought, Arthur, 'love was heaven, and heaven was love;' at least, that is my idea of the passion."

"Mary!" exclaimed her brother, "presume not to touch upon ground where your foot has never yet trod. Be wise, and remain in your ignorance, uninteresting, and uninformed. There

can be no heaven in the dire suspense, the conscious feeling, the fear of scorn, the unrequited pang, the jealous agony of heart, the sighs of uncertainty."

Fanny Ponsonby rose hastily from her verdant seat, and Sir John Spottiswoode accompanied her, but they moved in different directions, when they reached the site of the chapel which once stood in this island, a place of worship for the living, and an asylum for the dead. Fanny Ponsonby appeared to seek refuge in solitary contemplation; for she sought the most distant spot, and stood gazing upon the lake. Sir John Spottiswoode remained among the relics of the dead, and seated himself on the low wall where Christobelle had listened to Captain Ponsonby's legendary tales in listless indifference.

"In general," said Captain Ponsonby, "an orator draws an audience by his powers of speaking, but I have chased mine into every corner of this little earth. Either I have said too little or too much. Mary and Mortimer are my best supporters. Sir John Wetheral, you are considered a veteran. Come, Miss Wetheral, let us follow the multitude; it is vain to waste my talent in empty space, so I dissolve the meeting."

ptain Ponsonby sprang to his feet, and the group gradually dispersed. Miss Pon- declared her brother should have been ted for the bar in lieu of the army, he held so fluently upon unintelligible subjects; he challenged Mortimer Grey to assist her covering the lost victims to Arthur's ora-

They set forth in the direction of the where Fanny Ponsonby still stood absorbed, done. Captain Ponsonby walked chatting hristobelle, who leaned upon her father's and all bent their steps towards the little d chapel.

Who would have supposed so many graves, lic devices, and rude sculpture, to lie for- n and deserted here?" said Captain Pon- , pointing to the various relics of other which lay half buried in the earth around. w many stirring events have filled this soil mouldering bones, and caused the tears w from maidens' eyes!"

How many fearful feuds have made these tains echo with shouts and cries of blood!" ked Sir John Wetheral.

Ay, but picture to your mind's eye the eal procession of the clans, slowly winding those bold cliffs in silent sorrow, while the

pibroch screamed its wild notes to wail the dead." Captain Ponsonby's countenance assumed a graver expression as he spoke, and Christobelle thought it infinitely became the cast of his features. It passed away quickly, as they advanced towards Sir John Spottiswoode, and he resumed his playful mood.

"Sir John Spottiswoode, Miss Wetheral likens you to a lover bewailing his mistress."

"Pray, Captain Ponsonby, do not say so," exclaimed Christobelle, in alarm.

"You looked as if you thought so, Miss Wetheral. Why is your eye so expressive?"

Christobelle felt distressed beyond measure at Captain Ponsonby's thoughtless speech, which elicited a cold smile from Sir John Spottiswoode. How could he smile so coldly upon her?

Christobelle had no spirits to reply to the cheerful remarks of Captain Ponsonby, who continued chatting with enviable ease of heart, upon every subject which offered itself to his notice. She was listening to a conversation infinitely more attractive between her father and Sir John Spottiswoode; but Captain Ponsonby's vivacity perpetually interrupted her attention, and called forth an unwilling and absent reply.

There is no annoyance so galling as the society of the happy, when a heart is struggling with grief, which seeks silence and solitude.

"Miss Wetheral, I bespeak your attention to those masses of clouds rising in the west; are they not beautiful? Did you ever fancy forms in the clouds? I do, often. See, Miss Wetheral, I can outline a lion rampant perfectly in that fleecy cloud—can you see it?"

Christobelle was disturbed: Sir John Spottiswoode had spoken about Alverton, and she wished to catch his words as they became indistinct. She answered Captain Ponsonby hastily, "No, indeed."

"I will point it out more distinctly. Fix your eye upon the third dark cloud, and by the side of that cloud stands the lion rampant. Now do you see what I mean?"

"Yes," replied Christobelle, almost peevishly, "I think I see what you mean." She trusted the subject was now ended.

"Well, can you distinguish a chariot and pair, Miss Wetheral? I see them distinctly, and in excellent proportions."

"It pains my sight, Captain Ponsonby, to fix my eyes upon the heavens."

"I will shade the light with my hat," said

Captain Ponsonby; "there, now your eyes are safe: the sun is behind my hat."

Christobelle was obliged to give her attention to the indefatigable Captain Ponsonby, and she lost all hope of Sir John Spottiswoode's remarks. Her spirits were powerfully depressed; happily, as the morning had opened upon her cheerful expectations, every pleasant prospect was clouded now. Sir John Spottiswoode had been gay and playful in conversation, till they alighted at Clanmoray, and from that moment her evil genius had pursued her. Why was the companion of her walks so changed, and why was he so cold and silent to his friend?

It appeared to Christobelle that Sir John Spottiswoode suffered under an equally potent spell. The tone of his voice as he spoke to her father was low and melancholy, and there was an expression in his withdrawn eyes, which particularly affected her. It was not of anger, he was too kind to feel angry; it was not of irritability, such as she had seen flashing and dull by turns, in her mother's countenance. There was an expression, touching and attractive in his disquietude, which went at once to her heart, and occupied its thoughts. She could ill endure the rapid remarks and conversation of Captain Ponsonby; how she wished to be again at

Fairlee, free from observation, and at liberty to think upon all that had occurred, in the solitude of her own apartment! Oh, that she had never seen Fanny Ponsonby! It was Fanny Ponsonby who pointed the arrow of jealousy at her heart, and tore the veil from her eyes. It was Fanny Ponsonby who taught her that friendship was but a cloak for deeper feelings, and that the pain she inflicted betrayed a heart prostrate before that Deity whose arrows, under a borrowed name, enter unsuspiciously into the soul of his victim.

"But, Miss Wetheral, you are meditating too gravely," resumed Captain Ponsonby, after a pause of some minutes, "the tombs of a thousand souls cause your eye to grow heavy. Let us sing away care upon these swelling earths. Where are the mirthful ones, and where are the singing-men, and the singing-women? The Greys are all musical."

The vivacious Captain Ponsonby called the party round him, and they seated themselves on the mounds which were scattered thickly round the chapel. The Greys formed the centre of the groupe, and their full voices wafted along the waters that beautiful glee of Calcot's, "Desolate is the dwelling of Morna." The effect

was truly delicious. Desolate, indeed, was the ground upon which they sat; and silent, indeed, were the sounds which in former times burst from the shores of Lochleven. The harmony and its wildly poetic words accorded well with the scene before and around them. "Yet, a few years, and the blast of the desert comes," fell upon Christobelle's ear, and roused a thousand emotions.

It seemed to describe in one short sentence the tale of life; and it too truly illustrated her own wretched position. She could not repress the tears which flowed at the thought, that even in her early youth, care was beginning to do its work. She turned involuntarily to look upon Fanny Ponsonby, the author of her wretchedness. She was seated a little apart, and her head had sunk upon her breast, as though the harmonious sounds had lulled her into deep repose; but Christobelle saw the heavings of her bosom, and knew she wept.

The Greys concluded their song, and Captain Ponsonby was called upon to lend his talents towards the harmony of the scene. The young officer was nothing loth: with inexpressible softness, and in excellent taste, he sung:

"There's something in that bonny face,
I never saw before, lassie;
Your actions a' have sic a grace,
I gaze and I adore, lassie."

Captain Ponsonby turned towards Christobelle, as he concluded the last line of the first stanza, and he pressed his hand gallantly upon his heart, as he gave the last verses:

"Sweet is the spring, and sweet the rose,
When moistened by the shower, lassie;
Bright on the thorn the dew-drop glows,
At morns refulgent hour, lassie:
But brighter, purer far than these
Thou art, and charm'st me more, lassie,
Than tongue can tell; I wondering gaze,
I gaze and I adore, lassie."

Christobelle blushed deeply at the general notice which Captain Ponsonby's manner attracted towards her, and Lady Wetheral thought it prudent to break up the party, lest the offended countenance of Lord Farnborough should deepen, and produce results in his conduct, which would overthrow her dearest plans. She turned to Miss Ponsonby.

"My dear Miss Ponsonby, are not those clouds threatening? I have observed them some minutes with fearful forebodings: my dear Bell, fold your plaid round you, the air is becoming fresh."

The attention of the party was turned anxiously to the west, and General Ponsonby advised an immediate return to the opposite

shore. Captain Ponsonby went forward to order the boatmen to their oars, and Lord Farnborough took his vacant place by the side of Christobelle. His lordship spoke with much vehemence of manner.

"You have been bored with your neighbour, Miss Wetheral, yet you have preferred him to me."

"Captain Ponsonby did not weary me, my lord."

"I hate those talking fellows, yet ladies love to be attended by them. I can't think why all ladies like Ponsonby to run after them."

Christobelle was offended by Lord Farnborough's expressions. When his lordship attended her from Lochleven Castle to Fairlee Cove, all was courtesy and gallant bearing—but his lordship had become overbearing, and, if she might so express it, he was actually offensive in St. Mungo's Isle. She made no reply.

"Allow me to take charge of you to the shore, Miss Wetheral," continued his lordship.

Christobelle hesitated. "Captain Ponsonby, I believe—I rather think....."

"Of course I must give way," replied his lordship, drily, "of course every thing must give way to Captain Ponsonby."

Captain Ponsonby came up, to announce all was in readiness; and the party rose to prepare for departure. Lady Wetheral approached her daughter.

"Bell, you are devoting yourself very publicly to Captain Ponsonby. I intreat you to be cautious, and accept Lord Farnborough's offer of attendance."

"Mamma, I am offended with Lord Farnborough."

"Do not be silly, Miss Wetheral; this is not the moment to exhibit offended feelings. I wish you to walk with my lord, and return under his charge."

Lady Anna Herbert passed, leaning on Mr. Grey's arm. "Be quick, fair ladies, for there is every chance of rain," she exclaimed; "the boatmen prognosticate weather before we reach the main land."

There was much bustle in hurrying into the boats, and the wind rose suddenly, sweeping in gusts over the lake, ere the party left the island. Christobelle was hurried rapidly into the little vessel, between Lord Farnborough and Captain Ponsonby, and the rain began to descend in torrents, as they placed her, in the confusion, be-

tween Sir John Spottiswoode and Fanny Ponsonby.

"On, on, for your lives!" cried Captain Ponsonby, addressing the boatmen, and the party were launched upon the waters of Lochleven.

Christobelle was by the side of Sir John Spottiswoode, and her mind was tranquil as they rowed rapidly towards Clanmoray. He held an umbrella over her head; and endeavoured to guard her from the storm, by spreading his cloak round her feet and knees. She felt distressed and uncomfortable at the thought of his own exposure to the rain and wind. She intreated him to suffer her to return the cloak, without which he must be cold and comfortless.

"No," he replied gravely, "I do not consider my own feelings, I wish to secure your comfort."

"But I have *no* comfort in depriving you of warmth and shelter: you will catch a severe cold."

"Never mind, Miss Wetheral; my mother and Sophia will nurse me well at Alverton."

"At Alverton!" exclaimed Christobelle, in astonishment, "at Alverton!"

"Why not, Miss Wetheral?" he asked in low

tones, and his fine dark eyes were fixed upon her with such deep expression!

"Oh, no, if you are ill, I will nurse you; and Fairlee shall be your ——."

Christobelle stopped: her heart beat thickly —she could not speak the conclusion of her sentence—a weight, as of iron, bore down her eyelids, and she remained silent.

"You have been happy to-day, my pupil?" said Sir John Spottiswoode, after a moment's pause.

Christobelle waved her hand silently. She could not trust her voice; but Fanny Ponsonby was talking to Lord Farnborough, and she was wretched at the allusion to Alverton. Curiosity, anxiety, and the horrors of suspense, gave her courage to address her companion again; and she asked, in the recklessness of despair, why he contemplated returning so soon into Shropshire.

"Because," he said, "Lochleven is now a fever spot upon my heart."

Christobelle wept silently. Captain Ponsonby sat in the stern of the boat without speaking, as though even his gay spirit could not resist the heavy rain, and every one appeared to be cold, weary, and dispirited. Except Fanny Pon-

sonby's voice, which sung, in low tones, a plaintive air, not a sound escaped the party till they reached the shore; and then commenced another disagreeable contention between Lord Farnborough and Captain Ponsonby.

"Miss Wetheral, I claim you *this* time," said his lordship, hastily passing Fanny Ponsonby, and offering his hand.

"My good fellow," cried Captain Ponsonby, "I am before you half a minute, and have won the prize."

"I cannot understand why you persevere so pertinaciously in appropriating Miss Wetheral, Ponsonby."

"Can you, indeed, be ignorant upon such a point, Farnborough? Take care, Miss Wetheral—step firmly, and hold my hand."

"I must observe that you are needlessly officious, Ponsonby."

"Tell me so elsewhere, Farnborough; at present, I am attending upon Miss Wetheral."

Christobelle looked imploringly at Sir John Spottiswoode, but he was uncloaking Fanny Ponsonby, and she had taken his arm, to share with him the shelter of his umbrella. Christobelle cared not, then, who became her escort. Captain Ponsonby would not understand Lord Farn-

borough's anger, or reply to his observations; he chatted gaily, as he unclasped the heavy boat-cloak, which shrouded and encumbered Miss Wetheral's figure.

"In spite of the storm, Miss Wetheral, you spring brightly from your nest, untouched by the rain-drops; how do you manage to be so unlike the rest of the world? We will not wait for the other boat, which would detain us some time. Let me get you safely to Clanmoray. Take my arm fearlessly, and I will guide and support you up the pathway. Farnborough will be kind enough to escort the Miss Greys."

Lord Farnborough threw a haughty look at Captain Ponsonby, but he made no answer. His lordship folded his cloak round his tall, slight figure, and ascended the pathway in silence, and without a companion. The Miss Greys remained unattended on the shore of Lochleven.

"Farnborough is offended in earnest," observed Captain Ponsonby, "and the gentle syrens are to suffer. Miss Wetheral, you have put a feud between me and my noble guest."

"I am sorry, Captain Ponsonby, if any thing unpleasant should arise between you and my lord. It is altogether innocently done on my part."

"Oh! yes, you look so dove-like and so guileless, and yet you wield such warfare."

"Lord Farnborough appears easily irritated."

"Farnborough has been used to such easy conquests, that he resents the appearance of indifference. You have piqued him, Miss Wetheral; nevertheless, I am concerned to see the Miss Greys climbing the path alone in this rain. This is an unexpected termination to our agreeable day. It has been a really delightful day to me."

"Lochleven can never disappoint its visitors, Captain Ponsonby; even in this rain how beautiful it is!"

"Lochleven would, though, if certain persons and things did not combine to please me. I have enjoyed myself to-day—but you were my companion; I was with you at dinner—on the wall of the ruin—every where; and I have spent an extremely captivating day. I wonder what kind of day Farnborough will represent it?"

"As very agreeable, no doubt."

"I differ with you, Miss Wetheral. Fanny and your friend have seven league boots on, I fancy—how they are bounding on! I admire your friend, Miss Wetheral—fine, handsome fellow, only he looks melancholy."

"Does he?"

"Yes; his eyes were fixed upon your hand a full half hour at dinner—an hour, as we sat talking, and all the voyage; yet, like Lady Macbeth, his eyes were open, but their sense was closed. He has a lady-love in the south."

Christobelle started at Captain Ponsonby's suggestion. Impossible! she would not believe it! She never heard such a thing alluded to. If Sir John Spottiswoode loved in the south, Mrs. Pynsent would have named it. How came Captain Ponsonby to imagine such folly! The very supposition of Sir John's attachment, however, created pain, and chilled her into silence. Captain Ponsonby's conversation soon became wearisome, and she was glad when they reached Clanmoray.

It was a relief to find Lord Farnborough absent, and still more a relief to perceive the second party approaching in the distance. She wanted to be at Fairlee, to enjoy rest, and silence, and free communion with her thoughts. Captain Ponsonby's spirits were oppressive, and his polite anxiety amounted to absolute annoyance. Christobelle was ill, and restless, and eager to return home.

The carriage was ordered as soon as Lady

Wetheral arrived, and the Fairlee party were supplied by Miss Ponsonby with comfortable refreshment in the article of stockings and shoes. Every other apparel had been spared, by the thoughtful cares of Mrs. Ponsonby, who had wisely ordered a *depôt* of cloaks and umbrellas on board. Lord Farnborough did not appear during their short rest at Clanmoray, and Captain Ponsonby led Christobelle to the carriage, after the ceremonies of leave-taking had concluded. Miss Ponsonby hoped to enjoy Miss Wetheral's society a little more exclusively at a future time; but she seemed to be the entire property of Arthur and Lord Farnborough at St. Mungo's Isle. There was policy in allowing novelty to exhaust its powers of pleasing; and she would reserve her society till it would fill up a chasm, formed by the secession of an admirer. "Depend upon it, all this cannot last, fair Christobelle, and, like me, you will some day search in vain for a Télémaque."

"*I* shall not live to see the day, Miss Wetheral," said her brother, as he led Christobelle forward.

"Don't attach the smallest credit to Arthur's compliments," cried Miss Ponsonby, kissing her hand.

"Mary is very incorrect in her statements, Miss Wetheral," said Captain Ponsonby, as they passed through the hall. "You will receive me with a smile, if I call at Fairlee to-morrow?"

"With many smiles, Captain Ponsonby."

"No, one little particular welcome smile is my hope—give your many smiles to Farnborough. Fare you well!"

Christobelle entered the carriage, and Sir John Spottiswoode followed; but he seated himself by Lady Wetheral's side. Captain Ponsonby waved his hand, and stood in the rain, till the trees concealed him from sight.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Lady Wetheral spoke of the morning's entertainment with perfect approbation, as they drove home. "Every thing was so agreeably arranged — every body was so inclined to be amused, which constituted the charm of a party *al fresco*. Lord Farnborough, perhaps, was less disposed to consider himself at ease than the rest of the group; but circumstances did go a little '*à tort et à travers*' with poor Lord Farnborough. Some people were in the wrong place, assuredly, which might create a little uneasiness; but, considering the difficulty of selecting and arranging a large morning party, it had been admirably conducted. There was a little too much vivacity in Captain Ponsonby's manner: he was rather too *empressé*—but Lord Farnborough displayed the man of fashion in every movement." Christobelle did not argue against her mother's opinions, and

Sir John Spottiswoode sat, determined to be silent.

"Lord Farnborough," continued Lady Wetheral, "tells me he intends wandering round Lochleven some weeks longer."

"At Clanmoray?" asked Christobelle.

"No, my love, he thinks of building at Kinross." Christobelle sank back into her former position, quite indifferent to the whereabout of Lord Farnborough. Her ladyship resumed: — "Sir John, what a lovely creature is Fanny Ponsonby! I think I never beheld more beautiful eyes!"

"Miss Ponsonby is a beautiful woman!" replied Sir John Spottiswoode.

"I mean Fanny Ponsonby, the lady you monopolized, my dear Spottiswoode."

"I mean the same lady; but I was guilty of no monopoly, Lady Wetheral."

"She is most lovely indeed. My dear Bell, what an agreeable companion Miss Fanny Ponsonby would be to share in your lake diversions!"

"No, mamma, pray don't ask Fanny Ponsonby—pray think of no companion for me. I am a solitary being. I love to be alone."

"My dear girl, you are jealous!"

"I am not jealous of any one, I hope. I ad-

mire Miss Fanny Ponsonby—I think her very lovely—but I require no companion."

"Would you live quite alone, my love? It is not the wish of a young lady in general."

"When I feel particularly dull, mamma, I will ask for Miss Fanny Ponsonby."

Christobelle could not clearly define her fear of Miss Fanny Ponsonby's society, but her name would evermore be coupled with painful feelings. The first emotion of jealousy towards another had been elicited by her, and perhaps the recollection of that suffering inclined her to shun the innocent cause of the subtle intruder. Christobelle became restless at the mention of such a visitor at Fairlee; and though she endeavoured to reason away her alarm, the internal struggle increased. What could her mother mean?

The clouds broke away towards the evening, and the rain ceased; the terrace was soon dry, though the raindrops hung upon every leaf, and the bright lake lay tranquil after the storm. Lochleven was beautiful in its freshness, and the green tints of its wooded sides stood out in deeper and brighter light and shade from the heavy showers. Yet Sir John Spottiswoode did not ask Christobelle to walk with him; he did not ask her to admire with him the setting sun,

or to look with him upon the deepening shades of evening. He sat profoundly attentive over 'Bacon's Essays," and not once did his eye or lip address her. She also endeavoured to read, but her thoughts wandered over the incidents of the morning. Her eyes fixed themselves upon the lake, and not upon the page of history, as she considered the disappointments of the day, and mused upon the changed manner of Sir John Spottiswoode. She wished they had never joined the party to St. Mungo's Isle—she wished she had persevered in her solitary habits, and never accepted the invitation to Clanmoray.

Captain Ponsonby had wearied her, and Lord Arnborough's manner had offended her. Were these things an equivalent to the estranged manner of her friend? She wished she had been Fanny Ponsonby, for then Sir John Spottiswoode would have sought her. She wished she had been Fanny Ponsonby, for then the gentleman would have avoided her. She had no pleasure in being so publicly attended by Captain Ponsonby and his guest. She would have given worlds to have been silent and free from remark.

Lady Wetheral took her seat by Christobelle's

side, as she gazed vacantly upon the sparkling waters.

"Your thoughts are far away, my love, and yet I can guess their flight. They are at this moment at Clanmoray, and you are thinking of Fanny Ponsonby."

The truth of the remark startled Christobelle. It brought the colour into her face and forehead.

"Never mind Fanny Ponsonby, Bell. You have no rival there!"

"Do you think so, mamma?" she exclaimed. "How can you possibly tell his feelings?"

"His attention was exclusively given to you, Bell, though I confess you coquetted rather rashly."

"With whom did I coquette, mamma? I cannot endure that expression, it sounds so frivolous and vain."

"My love, strangers would remark you flirted too much with Captain Ponsonby, though *I* could comprehend your intentions, and I was amused with your little *tracasseries*."

"But how can you judge of his feelings towards Miss Fanny Ponsonby, mamma?"

"Because her attachment to him could not be concealed; it was apparent in her looks, and

in the pain she discovered during his attentions to you."

"We hardly exchanged words, mamma," remarked Christobelle, in great surprise; "and then only in the boat returning from the island."

"I am ignorant of what took place during your return, my love; but I saw enough to convince me that Lord Farnborough does not return the love of poor Fanny Ponsonby."

Lord Farnborough!—and her thoughts were with Sir John Spottiswoode! Her eyes fell upon the Lake in bitter disappointment. "I thought *he* had watched me — I thought *he* had not cared for Fanny Ponsonby!" were her silent reflections.

"I see," continued Lady Wetheral, in tones of triumph, "his lordship is jealous of Captain Ponsonby; and there you acted with great tact. I am sure it will lead to a proposal. He will be afraid of Arthur Ponsonby, and it will lead him to take a hasty step, but that step will exalt you into the future Duchess of Forfar. I fancied his Grace asthmatic this morning; he certainly wheezed very painfully as we walked up the pathway. This will raise you far above your sisters, my love; far more exalted than Julia. Lord Farnborough has proved my physician; he

has entirely chased away my nervous complaints."

Christobelle could not answer. She quitted the room in haste, and took shelter in her own apartments. There she prostrated herself, and prayed for a tranquil spirit. She knew her mother's temper, and was aware of her ambitious spirit; but she did not like Lord Farnborough, and never would she sell herself to be his wife. She would not confess that she loved Sir John Spottiswoode, or that she had given her affections to one who did not value the gift; but she would surely and perseveringly decline Lord Farnborough, if indeed that hasty step was ever taken which was to proceed from anger towards his friend, Captain Ponsonby.

Christobelle had witnessed Clara's misery, and suspected that Julia was not happy in her grandeur, therefore, she would not become the third prey to her mother's overweening ambition. She might suffer reproaches and harsh conduct, but she would not marry for wealth, and pine away in silent misery, a beacon to the thoughtless and the avaricious. If Sir John Spottiswoode quitted Fairlee, and if Lochleven was a fever-spot upon his heart, Christobelle felt she must endure sorrow: it could not be

more despairing than the feelings of Fanny Ponsonby, to whom her heart now clung in sympathy, and without pain. Fanny Ponsonby would be now a companion most grateful to her taste; all jealous fears were ended, and they could walk and weep together in fellowship. Poor Fanny Ponsonby! Christobelle wept for her and for herself. She remembered her abstracted look, and the haste with which she fled from her brother's remarks upon love. She remembered the downcast eye when Sir John Spottiswoode addressed her upon the subject of a lover's heart, and she saw her weep during the singing of "Desolate is the dwelling of Morna." How her heart yearned now to be near her!

Christobelle felt too unwell to return again into the drawing-room. The struggle of her thoughts brought on severe headache, and she tried to forget her disquietude in sleep. Lady Wetheral visited her daughter, before she retired for the night, and smiled as she spoke of her hasty retreat.

"Did Sir John Spottiswoode miss me?" Christobelle asked in some perturbation, as she rose from an unrefreshing doze, to listen to her remarks.

"No, my love, I believe not. He expressed

very polite regrets at your indisposition, but he has been reading the whole evening. He mentioned his return into Shropshire the end of this week."

Christobelle sank back in silence upon her pillow.

"Good night, my love, I will not keep you awake; but I trust your headache will be slept away. Take sal-volatile, and those nervous-drops, they always did me good, and we shall see what to-morrow will bring forth."

"So soon does he go, mamma?"

"Yes, my love. I think it would be advisable to ask Lord Farnborough to Fairlee, to superintend his intended little sporting-box at Kinross. I shall sound your father. Good night Bell."

Lady Wetheral retired, and left Christobelle again in silence and in darkness. She could not sleep. The night passed *so* slowly, as she lay revolving all these things in her mind! When she was happy, her nights flew by, and she rose refreshed; but now the hours lagged heavily, and her waking thoughts were upon the departure of Sir John Spottiswoode, and the introduction of Lord Farnborough in his place. She did not rise refreshed. She was tired and

unhappy when she descended into the breakfast-room. Sir John Spottiswoode was there alone; and, as he paid the compliments of the morning, his voice was thick, and sounded hoarse. Christobelle was sure he had caught cold upon the water, and it was to protect her that he exposed himself to wet, and had thrown off his cloak. She was overcome by the recollection, and, though she approached him timidly, she was in anxious fear lest he should suffer by his attention. His hand was heated as it touched hers in salutation, and she held it in alarm.

"Oh, you are feverish and ill, and you have caught cold by giving me your cloak! What can I do for you?"

"I have a little headache and sore throat," he replied, smiling; "but it will pass away, I hope, in the course of the day."

"It was that cloak," replied Christobelle, quite absorbed with fear, and totally forgetful that her hand was still held by him — "it was that cloak which you took off so suddenly, against my wishes. I was sure you would be ill!"

"I am not ill," he answered, feelingly: "your kind sympathy has cured me; but let me observe *your* pale cheeks in return, and let me

mourn over *them*." Sir John Spottiswoode led her to the window, and looked so kindly at her, that tears sprang into her eyes. "Here are tokens of a restless night," he said—"here are signs of sleepless hours, and heavy thoughts, my dear pupil. Would I could calm your gentle heart!"

"Then stay at Fairlee!" she exclaimed, as she wept without control, and cared not for the consequences of her indiscreet words—"stay at Fairlee, and be as kind as you used to be!" Christobelle felt the arm of her companion drawn round her, and she was pressed to his heart, as he replied.—

"I *will* remain, dearest pupil, I *will* remain at Fairlee, whatever pain it may cost me! I will do whatever you bid me do, to give you pleasure. God forbid *I* should ever give you a moment's sorrow! I would sooner suffer a thousand pangs, than see you weep one moment. Why do you weep, and distress my heart?"

Christobelle could not help it. Was it, indeed, painful to remain at Fairlee? Captain Ponsonby was right, then, in his suggestion—there *was* a lady in the south! She could not reply; a suffocating sensation precluded all speech.

"Why are you here so early?" continued Sir John Spottiswoode, in gentle accents, as Christobelle still leaned against him; "and why are your spirits so agitated, and your rest broken? If such is your present state, what will your affectionate heart endure hereafter? Your delicate frame is unequal to contend with such deep emotions!"

Christobelle made a strong effort to check her weeping fit, and she became more tranquil. Sir John Spottiswoode's arm still surrounded and supported her; but she felt that, when its dear support should be withdrawn, she would be cast upon the wide world for ever.

"Your friends are round you," resumed her companion, "and you shall be the arbitress of *my* movements. I will not quit Lochleven while I can be of use to its dear inmate. Oh, my dear Christobelle! how the schoolmaster will guard his pupil! But when," he added, hesitatingly, drawing her closer to him, and even clasping her to his heart—"when will he be here again?"

"Whom do you speak of? Captain Ponsonby?" she exclaimed; "he wearies me, and every body wearies me!"

"I do not speak of him. I do not speak of

Captain Ponsonby," replied Sir John Spottiswoode, withdrawing his arm hastily, and moving a few paces. "I mean another and happier man. You know whom I would name." He advanced again to the window, where Christobelle remained rooted. "You know whom I allude to, Miss Wetheral."

"Lord Farnborough?" she articulated, with difficulty.

Sir John would not meet her eye.

"I did mean that person. Will he not visit Fairlee, Miss Wetheral? Will he not? no, he is not worthy of such a heart—of such powerful affection!" He walked from the window to the door, and again he turned, and approached Christobelle. "It is a severe trial to have waited and loved as I have done, and yet suffer disappointment. It was a strange fancy —was it not, my pupil?—to wait so long, and hope so perseveringly? But I will not quit Fairlee, since you bid me not."

Christobelle could not comprehend Sir John Spottiswoode's emotion. She could not divine his allusions; she only grasped at his promise to remain, and even that was balm to her heart.

"Oh, yes," she repeated, "stay, and take my part, for I know I shall appeal to papa and you, if I am reproached."

"Who dares presume to reproach you? Who dares to offer a harsh word to you? By the heavens above, if I heard his false lips utter one syllable of unkindness to a creature too gentle and excellent for his worthless mind, I would strike him dead!" Sir John Spottiswoode's eyes struck fire, and his tall figure became still more erect.

"Of whom are you talking?—whose lips are false?" asked Christobelle, in stupid amazement.

"I know him!" continued Sir John Spottiswoode, kindling as he spoke; "but I will follow him through the world, if he gives one pang to such a heart as your's, dearest and loveliest pupil, creature of my fancy and my heart! He is not worthy of you, Christobelle." He stopped, and fixed his eyes upon her with an expression so wretched, that she took his hand in terror: he snatched it from her.

"Do not break my heart, Christobelle; and do not touch me, if you have mercy. Withdraw your wish, and let me quit Fairlee for ever!"

"Oh, no, no," she cried, clasping her hands, and sinking into a chair; "if you go, who will stand between me and my mother?"

"Your mother!" Sir John Spottiswoode gazed

upon Christobelle with astonishment. "Your mother!" he repeated.

"I cannot, will not marry Lord Farnborough," exclaimed Christobelle, almost bending in agonized feelings; "and who will save me from her anger!"

"Christobelle!" burst from her companion. She heeded not.

"I will not be driven into misery to minister to ambition. It is so cruel—so very cruel."

"Christobelle!" again ejaculated Sir John Spottiswoode, "look at me!"

Christobelle could not look up—she could not shake off her weight of misery. She sat with her hands pressed tightly upon her heart. "If you leave me, who will assist my father in warding off my reproaches? Who will soften her heart, and soothe my poor spirit? Who will plead for me, and save me?"

Sir John Spottiswoode knelt by her side, and took her cold hands in his. "Christobelle," he said, "I will plead for you, and save you. Will you recompense me in return? Will *you* love and cherish the heart which adores and blesses you?—which would suffer all evils, all indignities, for your dear sake?"

Christobelle sat transfixed. She dared not

breathe, lest the vision should vanish from her sight.

"Shall I tell you, Christobelle, how I have waited for you, and lived upon the hope of making you love me, when I was far away? Shall I tell you how I watched over you, and lingered till I could ask for you?"

Christobelle could only smile a reply to her lover's questions, and she was again folded in his arms. Oh, happy, thrice happy moment!

"Shall I tell you," demanded her companion, "how your mother deceived me, yesterday morning, when I spoke of you upon the terrace? No, I will not allude to it now, since all my horrible fears are ended."

"Tell me nothing now," she replied, "but let me return to my room, to think—to assure myself this is not a vision—to consider all things over." Miss Wetheral rose.

"Will you go with me to our rocky seat, after breakfast," he asked, "if I resign you now? I am loth to lose you from my sight; stay a few moments longer, dearest."

"Not now; but I will walk with you to our old place of refuge. The bell will ring, and I am too agitated to meet my mother. I could meet no one at this moment."

"But, my Chrystal, one—one more embrace!" and Christobelle was encircled again in the arms of the best and dearest of human beings. She flew from his embrace to the sanctuary of her own apartment, and her first movement was prayer. She prayed for humility; she prayed for strength to bear her load of happiness; and she prayed that she might not love the creature beyond the Creator. When Christobelle rose from her knees, she sat down to think upon all these things.

Sir John and Lady Wetheral were at the breakfast-table, when Christobelle descended the second time. She did not once meet her lover's eye, for she could not endure its brightness; but her bosom had cast its load of sorrow, and her thoughts danced in the beams of a new happiness. Lady Wetheral was pleased by her appearance.

"My dear Bell, that little headache was a *tour de jongle* to get rid of us all. Your dreams were pleasant, for your eyes sparkle, and you look most amusingly demure."

Christobelle cast her eyes upon the ground; a deep and most distressing suffusion crimsoned her face.

"Perhaps," continued her ladyship, "your

gay dreams may have prognosticated good. I have also my dream. I am dreaming that friends from Clanmoray will call to-day."

Christobelle was silent. She knew her mother dreamt not of the blow which awaited her. She knew her ladyship did not dream of her attachment to Sir John Spottiswoode. She could not awaken her at that moment to the fallacy of her hopes, neither could she lend herself to deception. She was aware her mother's ambitious wishes believed her young heart unable to contend against a dukedom, and that her fear of Sir John Spottiswoode had ceased from the morning of Lord Farnborough's visit. She had then chatted to his lordship, in the full flow of happy spirits, and her mother's ambition had "o'ertopped" its meaning. She could not lead her into deeper error.

Christobelle's appetite was gone, and she scarcely touched the small French roll which lay upon her plate. She had eaten and drank in sorrow, though the meal did not afford nourishment; but, in joy, the very sight of food became loathsome. It appeared to Christobelle's mind, that Sir John Spottiswoode's love — his expressed love—was intellectual food, sufficient for many days; that her spirit would renew

under its blessed influence, and that creature-comforts suited only the labourer and the hireling. It was impossible to remain long at the breakfast-table. She felt the triumphant glance of her lover was upon her, and her heart longed for solitude, to question itself again upon its sudden happiness. She wanted to ask herself, over and over, if it was really true that she was loved by Sir John Spottiswoode—if it was really true that her affections were returned, and that she was happy?

Christobelle quitted the breakfast-room as early as politeness would admit, for the desultory conversation of her companions was painful to her thoughts, and disturbed her train of mental reasonings. Sir John Spottiswoode watched her retreat, but she could not meet his imploring look. She knew its purport, and she would surely keep her promise of walking with him to the rocky seat; but she *must* be alone for some time. She required a short season of solitude, to task her thoughts and collect her scattered energies; and, above all, she wished to see her father. Before Christobelle could surrender herself to the floating visions of joy which crowded on her brain, she must see her father!

Christobelle remained an hour walking up and

down her dressing-room, ere she could quell the emotions of her soul, and then she descended into her father's study. He was reading; and, for some moments, an indefinable sensation of shame kept her silent. At last, Christobelle gained courage to address her kind and indulgent parent. "Papa, if you are not engaged, I wish to speak to you, if you please."

Sir John Wetheral laid down his book, and assured his child his attention was ever alive to his Chrystal's summons: but she became agitated and confused as she approached the subject. "Papa," she stammered forth, "I came to say something, and I don't know how to say it."

Sir John Wetheral smiled, and drew her to him. "Well, my love, which is it—my Lord Farnborough, or the humble Captain? It must be a novel subject which confuses my poor little companion, and it *must* be a love affair. Which of them is intending to deprive me of your society, Chrystal?"

"Neither, papa." Christobelle became still more distressed and confused at his mistake.

"Well, then, it must be the old duke, or that young man with the whip. I cannot approve of either, my love."

Christobelle threw her arms round his neck. "No, no, papa; think again."

"Ah, I have it, Chrystal. It is that young wanderer upon the terrace, who is watching the windows of your apartments so eagerly." Christobelle's head fell upon his shoulder. "Be not alarmed, my child. If there is a heart as kind as Boscawen's, and as affectionate as Pynsent's, it is the heart of Spottiswoode. Now go, and tell him what I say."

Christobelle was too confused and too joyful to speak her gratitude, but her heart was known to the parent who had loved and watched over her from the hour of her birth. He led her to the door. "Go, my best love, and tell your friend, and my friend, that he has set at rest all my hopes and fears for your welfare. Tell him it is only into his hands I would relinquish my child. There, fly to the poor puzzled youth, for he is lingering under your windows." Sir John Wetheral closed the door, and his daughter was alone in the hall, almost stunned by the rapidity of the morning's eventful incidents. She would have proceeded to the terrace, but her mother's voice called her to the sitting-room.

"Bell, is that you?"

Christobelle found her ladyship seated in a

lounging chair, employed with her knotting. She looked up.

"I thought I recognized your step, my love; the fairy step, as Lord Farnborough calls it. I wish you to remain entirely in the grounds, Bell; indeed, I wish you not to quit the house this morning. Stay with me, and wind these silks; they plague and impede my work."

"I am only going to the cliff, mamma: if any body comes, you will be so good as to send for me, perhaps."

"My love, I cannot send the whole establishment in different directions for you, upon all occasions. Your walks become a serious evil."

"I will remain on the terrace, then, mamma: I have promised to join Sir John Spottiswoode."

"I do not approve of such daily walks, Bell—such wild roaming over the hills. I wish you to wind these obdurate skeins for me: you forget caution and propriety. I insist upon your avoidance of Sir John Spottiswoode this morning. Lord Farnborough must not always find you appropriated."

Sir John Spottiswoode appeared at the window which opened upon the terrace at this moment. Lady Wetheral kissed her hand to him, and he entered.

"My dear Spottiswoode, assist me to persuade my restive daughter that so much exercise is hurtful. I wish her to remain with me this morning."

"The day is so beautiful, Lady Wetheral, and the air so reviving!" he observed. "I am sure this fresh breeze will exhilarate her, and bring the roses into her cheeks."

Her ladyship raised her glass to her eye, and slightly examined her daughter's countenance.

"Bell, my love, your bloom is less vivid, but I think I prefer the delicacy of its present tone. I have very essential reasons for wishing you to remain with me this morning. I feel languid and unwell — very languid after the fatigues of yesterday." Lady Wetheral's voice grew fainter as she uttered the last sentence: and she sank back in her chair, in an attitude of languor. "My love, pray wind those skeins for me. I am a poor creature, you see."

It was useless to contend: Christobelle's destined walk must give way to her mother's quiet determination that she should not become conspicuous with Sir John Spottiswoode, and it was her duty to yield to her wishes. Christobelle relinquished, therefore, all hopes of a *tête-à-tête* with her lover, and prepared to obey

her commands, by occupying herself with the silks. She had not courage to meet the disappointed eye of her companion, nor indeed did she wish him to discover, by the expression of her own orbs, how severely she suffered by her obedience.

Sir John Spottiswoode was silent under the existing order of things, and forbore to offer an opinion upon its unfitness; but he quietly assisted Christobelle's operations, and held the skeins for her better convenience in winding them. The whole affair arranged itself in such perfect pantomime, that she could not resist a smile and glance at her assistant, which amply repaid her self-control. An expression of gratified happiness played upon his manly countenance, and lighted up his eyes, which communicated itself to Christobelle's heart, and caused intense gratitude for the blessing conferred upon her in the gift of his affections. She felt that she could meet her mother's opposition, her irony, her bitterness, with patience, since she had won all that seemed valuable upon earth—all that was excellent, and affectionate, and kind—the heart of Sir John Spottiswoode. She had received the blessing too, at the very moment when her fears believed him indifferent to her

love: and when she suffered the pangs of jealousy, elicited by Fanny Ponsonby, and continued by the surmise of Captain Ponsonby; yet it was a change so suddenly effected, that she could scarcely believe in its reality. Her lover knelt before her, holding the extended skein, yet she could not place faith in the certainty that all was not a dream: she heard her mother speak, and yet it appeared a vision, from which, she trusted, she might never wake.

"My dear Spottiswoode, you are Hercules with the distaff."

"I have made my choice too, like Hercules, Lady Wetheral. I have selected virtue, and I find I have also gained pleasure, for they are seldom separate, after all. Pleasure does not include virtue always: but virtue rarely moves without pleasure; I find it so now. I am virtuously employed, and it is my greatest pleasure. I have great pleasure in assisting your labours, Lady Wetheral."

"You appear to great advantage, Spottiswoode; but I hope you are not making a pain of pleasure. Bell has already broken her thread twice."

"Miss Wetheral is all kindness; she bears

with my awkward attempts to be useful. I know I am very trying to her patience. Another thread broken! My dear Miss Wetheral, be calm."

"I believe I must relinquish it, for a few moments," Christobelle observed; "my hands are so tremulous."

"I am going to lecture you, Miss Wetheral, to spare your mamma the trouble of pronouncing an exhortation in her languid state. Pray, make another trial, and hold your hand steadily —*so*." Sir John Spottiswoode pressed her hand affectionately, and held it as he continued — "Now, my dear pupil, you must try to feel tranquil, and be assured all efforts succeed, if they are made with perseverance."

"Very well," said Christobelle, laughingly; "my next effort shall be boldly made."

"But, stay," he added, detaining the hand she would have withdrawn, "stay one moment, while I examine this entanglement." Sir John Spottiswoode bent forward to conceal his movement and Christobelle's confusion from Lady Wetheral's notice. "This is rather a puzzling affair at this moment, Miss Wetheral, but we must succeed in time by mutual perseverance—

if you are calm, and I am near you, to offer counsel. Do you perfectly understand me?"

"I believe I do. I am to be calm, and try to unravel this puzzling work in patience. I quite understand you, and I will try to do so."

"When did my pupil ever misunderstand my words?" he replied, with energy; and, forgetful of his own cautions and Lady Wetheral's presence, he caught Christobelle's hand to his lips. She was terrified at the action, but her mother had little time to express her indignation, for the door was suddenly thrown open, and the servant announced Lord Farnborough.

His lordship entered with a heated and raised complexion, and he attentively surveyed the apartment, as he spoke.

"So I am before him at last. I thought I should find the fox in his earth, for he was off an hour ago: this is capital."

"My dear lord, you are most welcome. This is really a neighbourly action." Lady Wetheral rose promptly from her languid repose, and received her visiter with bright smiles of pleasure. Lord Farnborough recollected himself, and recovered his self-possession, as he paid his *devoirs* to the party.

"I fear I came in rather hastily, Lady We-

theral; but you will excuse my eager manner, when you learn its motive. I thought Ponsonby had been before me. We have had a race for it, I assure you."

"Captain Ponsonby has not called, I believe," replied Lady Wetheral, in tones of mingled triumph and hope, "unless he is closeted with my husband."

"Ha!" exclaimed his lordship, "then he *has* preceded me? Lady Wetheral, allow me an immediate conference, if you please."

"Certainly, my lord; we will retire into my own sitting-room."

"Here, if you please, for time is very precious. Will you allow me to lead you upon the terrace, Lady Wetheral? You must excuse my impetuosity."

Lady Wetheral accepted Lord Farnborough's offered arm, and she was hurried upon the terrace; but not a glance or movement on her part betokened fatigue, or a remnant of her past languor. Her step was firm, and her eyes beamed with expected triumph.

"Chrystal, my own Chrystal," cried Sir John Spottiswoode, as the receding figures were lost to sight, "if ever I loved and admired you more truly and fondly than I fancied I could do, it

there was blessedness in the pres

"But why so?" he asked ter
has Chrystal to fear?"

"Lord Farnborough's visit is
myself; I know it as surely as
words spoken. I know I have
dure from my mother!"

"But you are mine, Chrystal
take you from me now? Are y
my very own?"

"I know it: I feel secure of
mother will say such harsh thing

"Fear not, my beloved. If
each other, surely we can endure
patience."

Yes, he spoke truly. Christol
dure a long, long trial for *his* lo
suffer a protracted misery, to de

of her mother's ambitious spirits: she could meet her lover's entreaty to be patient with smiles. She told him she would endure all things with firmness—that she would not anticipate evil. She called upon him to rejoice with her in her father's approval, and she told him of her interview and confession. How swiftly did their short *tête-à-tête* glide by! and how delightedly did Christobelle listen to his fears respecting Lord Farnborough!

"But why did you not tell *me* all this? Why did you suppose such incredible things in silence—to leave me in such cruel and useless suspense? Oh, Spottiswoode, *one* word yesterday morning, and all this had been spared us!"

"No, I was silenced by your mother for ever, in our morning lounge upon the terrace. Had you not disclaimed all idea of Lord Farnborough this morning, and had not hope rushed into my heart unbidden, by the confession of your misery, I had never dared to breathe a word of my sentiments. I believed you loved Lord Farnborough."

"She could not tell you *that!* Surely my mother did not tell you so—oh! she never told you I cared for *him!*" Christobelle shuddered at the thought; but the encircling arms of her

lover restrained the movement which impelled her to start from her chair.

"I was assured your heart was on the point of acknowledging Lord Farnborough's power, Chrystal—and your mother spoke in terms of proud approval."

"Oh, my mother, my mother!" exclaimed Christobelle, weeping at the thought of her cruel policy; "I might have been sacrificed for ever to your ambitious wishes! I should have been given in utter wretchedness to a man I did not love, and consigned to hopeless misery!"

"Weep not, dearest," said her companion, and I will tell you how your presence shall brighten and bless the scenes of my solitary wanderings at Alverton — how it shall illumine my future life, and reward me for my patient waiting. Did you but know, my love, how I feared you would be appropriated, ere I could claim an interest in your heart, and, yet, how firmly I resolved to leave you to the working of its own resolves, you would pity and love me for my resolution."

"I *do* love you!" Christobelle concealed her face upon his shoulder. They were silent for some moments, but his lips were pressed upon her forehead, and she was in his arms—both too engrossed, with the certainty of being at last

happy, to break the deep silence. Christobelle forgot her mother — she forgot Lord Farnborough; she thought not of his errand, or her future anger. She was in a trance:—she thought all reproach—all suffering—all unkindness, had no further power to wound, for she belonged to her lover, and he would shelter her, as he did at that moment, in his beloved embrace. The world without might struggle with deep and mighty commotion—it might drink deeply of the elements of strife, and do battle with the stirring natures of mortality—but *she* was safe from strife and suffering now. She had given herself, heart and soul, to the man she loved dearer than herself, or aught in creation besides. She was the promised bride of Sir John Spottiswoode!

CHAPTER XXVII.

Lord Farnborough's mission was speedily developed to Lady Wetheral, as they paced the terrace together. His lordship at once opened the subject, which lay so closely upon his mind's peace, and at once laid his dukedom at Christobelle's feet.

"Upon my honour, Lady Wetheral, my respect for your daughter is excessive, and I wish to make known my sentiments at such an early period, because I see I have rivals. Ponsonby is over head and ears in love, and there's no knowing how many more will become so; for her beauty is really something extraordinary. Miss Wetheral is the loveliest creature I have ever seen."

"My daughter is flattered by such remarks, my dear lord, and her mother feels proud of such an encomium. She is a treasure to me, in every

nse of the word, as she will prove to the man ho wins her."

"I can offer much more than Ponsonby," conued Lord Farnborough; "and I think, at this ry early stage of our acquaintance, an earl's ronet in possession, and a duke's strawberry-aves in prospect, may perhaps entitle me to her tice beyond the claims of humbler men."

"Lord Farnborough may claim a lady's presence upon still higher grounds than mere rank fortune," said her ladyship, with smiling approbation, and gently pressing his lordship's arm. ord Farnborough was gratified by the compliment.

"It is very soothing, Lady Wetheral, to my elings, to be assured that my suit is not displeasing to her parents. May I hope Miss Weeral's affections are disengaged?"

"I can answer for my daughter's free heart, y lord. I am sure—indeed, I know her affections are untouched."

"You think Ponsonby has not got before me to her good opinion?"

"I have anthority to say, Captain Ponsonby s not *yet* succeeded, my dear lord."

"Ponsonby has been very successful with the nale heart, and I know he was attentive yes-

terday—but he has nothing to offer. I think Sir John Spottiswoode fluttered round Fanny Ponsonby — nothing *there*, you think, Lady Wetheral?"

"My daughter's affections are not so lightly won, my lord; and my interest is not with Sir John Spottiswoode."

"It would be a great feather in my cap, to win Miss Wetheral from all competitors. She would be a star in town, and cause a great sensation. She shall be the best-dressed woman in St. James's, if she appears there as Lady Farnborough. She would have the most splendid jewels in the drawing-room."

"My dear child's tastes are simple and unexpensive, Lord Farnborough. She does not court notoriety. Her heart is happiest in her own home."

"That is a lady's throne," observed his lordship, "and man is happy, who marries a creature devoted to his comforts."

"Is the duke aware of your present application, my lord?"

"I believe he surmises what I am about, Lady Wetheral, for your daughter's charms almost led to a quarrel this morning with Ponsonby. It decided me at once to announce my wishes here,

or he would be laying siege to Miss Wetheral. I saw that pretty clearly. However, if you stand my friend, Lady Wetheral, I am safe."

"My lord, I *think* my wishes will point my daughter's affections; I believe I possess her entire confidence, and the control of her judgment; and the very proper way in which you announce your wish of an alliance with our family, prompts me to exert my influence in your favour. I admire your high-spirited address, my lord, in consulting *me* before you applied to the lady."

"I wish to do every thing in order," replied his lordship, "and I know Ponsonby has serious intentions, which gave me some alarm. When may I pay my respects to Miss Wetheral? Will she allow me an interview soon, Lady Wetheral? You may conceive my impatience to be received as one of your family."

"I will summon my daughter, my lord, and leave you together: I am sure of my child's ingenuous heart; and she will scorn to allow any man to remain in suspense, when his full intentions and hopes are disclosed."

Lady Wetheral's appearance at the sitting-room window unfolded her thoughts and expectations to Christobelle's mind in one glance. The

subdued look of triumph, the forced calmness of manner, contrasted with the glowing expression of every feature, left her daughter not an instant in ignorance of what had taken place. She felt that her hour of trial was already arrived—that she must collect her thoughts, and meet, with patient firmness, all the crosses in her path—that she must redeem her promise of patience to her lover. Christobelle had little leisure for mental reflection, for Lady Wetheral entered the room, and compelled attention.

"My dear love, Lord Farnborough requests the honour of your attention for a few moments: I have promised that you will join his lordship on the terrace. Your instant acquiescence will oblige me, Bell." Sir John Spottiswoode quitted the room. She continued—"It is a relief to lose sight of one's friends for a few minutes; I wish Spottiswoode had found amusement elsewhere. Hasten, my dear girl, and meet me after your little consultation in my room. I won't say a word till you rejoin me; but, my dear child, this is the very happiest hour in my existence—a happier hour than when my Julia told me she had won Ennismore. My wish, Bell, has been gloriously fulfilled; every thing

has crowned that wish, without an effort. I am a proud and happy mother!"

"Oh, mamma," cried Christobelle, kneeling before her, "do not misunderstand me, and do not hope against hope. I cannot marry Lord Farnborough!"

"Do not rouse me into anger, Bell, as you hope for peace in this world; and do not let me find you a mean-minded creature, content to live in insignificance. Go instantly, and meet Lord Farnborough."

"I cannot go, mamma; I have no affections to bestow upon Lord Farnborough — do not let me meet him! Tell him, I deplore his disappointment, if it proves such — but I cannot see him!"

Lady Wetheral's face turned pale as marble, as she caught Christobelle's hand, and dragged her forward.

"Tell me only that you are thinking of Captain Ponsonby, to break my heart at once, Bell!"

"Oh, no, not Ponsonby—I care not for Captain Ponsonby, mamma: but do not look so pale and angry—you terrify me!"

"So you have led me into error—deceived my hopes — and destroyed me, while you sought

the love of Spottiswoode! Is that truly so? Is it Spottiswoode you love?"

Christobelle shrank from her grasp in terror. Lady Wetheral's face and manner became fearfully changed; she caught the back of a chair to support herself.

"Bell, I have answered for your dutiful submission to my wishes. I have promised for you —I have told Lord Farnborough you are free. Go to him, and say that I spoke in truth. A dukedom, Bell! — a dukedom! — my last, my only child, a dukedom is offered you!"

Christobelle sat in terrified silence: she could not endure to see her mother suffer, but she had no consolation to offer. Lady Wetheral approached her, and took her cold hands in hers.

"Bell, a child never yet prospered that gave pain to her parent, and now you can raise me into happiness by your obedience. To see my daughter a duchess — a duchess, moving in stately magnificence, is the dearest wish of my heart. It has been my hope, ever since your first introduction to Lord Farnborough — my dearest project by day and by night, my earthly contemplation for many days! Go to him, Bell, for I have answered for you, and you *will* go; think better of it, think of your future regrets, when

repentance will come too late! Go to Lord Farnborough, I command you, Bell."

A mother's commands had never been disputed by Christobelle, and it was, perhaps, better to meet his lordship. By an open declaration of engaged affection, which would end all further hopes on his side, Christobelle's disquietudes would cease; and her mother would reconcile herself to a step which must be unavoidable, by every honourable and upright principle of justice. Christobelle had no doubts to solve, no inquiries to make with her own heart. Every feeling of her soul was given to Sir John Spottiswoode, and Lord Farnborough had not deserved to endure suspense. She obeyed her mother's command, therefore, to meet his lordship upon the terrace. Her steps were slow, and her mind was torn with contending feelings, but she went forward.

"Bell," said Lady Wetheral, as she passed through the open window, "do not be rash."

Lord Farnborough approached with respectful pleasure. Christobelle returned his greeting with a silent bow, but she could not command words, and she stood in silence before him. His lordship hesitated.

"Miss Wetheral is aware, I presume, of my

errand here — of my anxious wish — of my hopes?"

"My mother has informed me, my lord, of your wishes—of the honour done me, but . ..."

"Will you do me the honour to walk up the terrace, Miss Wetheral, while I explain my feelings and motives." His lordship offered his arm; Christobelle declined it silently. "I trust you will not misinterpret my action, Miss Wetheral. I am not a confident man, or one who presumes upon a parent's interest in my behalf — it was done in all respect, Miss Wetheral."

"I am sure it was so, my lord—my only motive for declining your assistance, is the fear of giving a hope, where none is intended."

His lordship appeared startled and annoyed.

"When I have explained my wishes, Miss Wetheral, to you, and when I state my hope that you will allow me to visit you at present, simply as a friend, till you can give me a dearer title, I trust you will listen calmly to what I am further anxious to say."

"Lord Farnborough," replied Christobelle, with trepidation of voice and manner, "I will not deceive you for one moment. Pray do not think of me, for it is useless. I — I — cannot

love you, or even give you hope that I ever shall love you. Pray do not think of me."

Lord Farnborough bowed with great stiffness. "I beg your pardon, Miss Wetheral, for this annoyance, but, allow me to say, I was assured you were disengaged."

"My lord, I was ——, I am ——." The words died upon Christobelle's tongue; she could not utter them.

"Ponsonby has made an impression upon your heart, Miss Wetheral! I thought—I was *sure* of it yesterday! That fellow is born to be my misery."

Christobelle laid her hand upon his lordship's arm, and endeavoured to speak distinctly, but she could only articulate, "No, no, no!"

"Do not fear me, Miss Wetheral," replied his lordship, with offensive hauteur, "I am not intending to wreak vengeance upon a man you approve, but this is the second time he has traversed me!"

"Captain Ponsonby is nothing to *me*, my lord; Captain Ponsonby can never be any thing to me!" Christobelle exclaimed, "but pray excuse me if I drop the subject for ever. I am honoured—I am flattered—but it never can be, Lord Farnborough."

His lordship gazed eagerly in her face. "Repeat those words again, Miss Wetheral! Assure me again that Ponsonby is, and will be, nothing to you!"

"I do repeat it, my lord."

"Then, Miss Wetheral, I am content. I will believe your assertion, and it gives me hope. Do not be in haste to reply. Allow me your attention for a few moments."

"I cannot listen, my lord. I have spoken the truth, and I beg to be allowed to say this subject must end for ever. I have no affections to bestow upon yourself, or upon Captain Ponsonby."

"I beseech you to listen one moment — one moment, Miss Wetheral! I do not ask for your affections yet. I could not presume to hope even for a preference, upon our short acquaintance. I only pray for leave to visit you—to try and interest your heart, by my attentions and my love. Lady Wetheral gives me hope, Christobelle!"

"No one can give hope for another, my lord."

"Lady Wetheral assures me your heart is free."

Christobelle hesitated. Why did she feel

ashamed to utter the truth, and end at once the displeasing subject? Why hesitate? She suffered many struggles between shame and timidity, but at last the victory was gained, and she spoke with resolution.

"My lord, I love another — I have given my affections to another person—excuse me."

His lordship bowed low, with peculiar frigidity of manner. "I wish you good morning, Miss Wetheral. I regret my intrusion: I am answered."

Christobelle curtseyed with equal hauteur.

"I am sorry my words have produced dissatisfaction, my lord. It was but just that my sentiments should not be misunderstood, and I do not reproach myself for having withheld an ungenerous and delusive hope. Good morning, my lord."

They parted with a second silent and distant salutation, and Lord Farnborough quitted the terrace.

Christobelle stood some moments, vainly endeavouring to gain fortitude to meet her mother — but now the deed was done, and his lordship had departed, the terror of Lady Wetheral's anger fell upon her heart, and she flew to her father for protection. Sir John Wetheral was

in his study conversing with Spottiswoode, when Christobelle appeared, and both gentlemen rose, smiling at her entrance; but she threw herself into her father's arms with hurried steps, and besought him to save her from her mother's reproaches. She felt it was impossible to meet her alone, or bear the indignant flashes of her eye. She implored her father to be the bearer of her refusal, and to endeavour to soften her mother's anger, when she learned that Lord Farnborough was returning to Clanmoray, a rejected and offended suitor.

Sir John Wetheral soothed his daughter's fears with kind approval of her conduct. He spoke affectionately of her attachment to his friend, and commended the propriety of her sincere avowal to Lord Farnborough. He would leave her now under the soothing care of Spottiswoode, who was destined, he hoped, to be her future guide through life. He would give his Christobelle to his care, to listen to his reasonings and his affection, while he himself sought the presence of his lady. He bade his daughter fear nothing. He would shield her from all the storms of life, till he relinquished her into a husband's care. And, while she continued to act with honourable and high principles, untouched

by sordid temptations, and the miseries of an insatiable ambition, she must be free from self-reproach, and would be patient under trials which could not greatly affect her peace of mind. Sir John Wetheral then placed his daughter's hand within the warm grasp of Spottiswoode, and left them together.

Lovers' happiness is composed of a million nothings, and every indescribable rapture, which in after days provoke the laughter and ridicule of its votaries. All those who have loved understand it well — and to those who have never known a sincere attachment, it is a sealed book. Christobelle utterly forgot all mundane concerns, as she listened to the fond effusions of her lover's heart, and owned an affection deep and imperious as his own. Christobelle almost forgot there was a drop of bitter yet left, in her cup of joy.

Sir John Wetheral passed on to his lady's apartment, little aware of the scene which awaited his peaceful nature, produced by defeated ambition, in an ardent spirit. Lady Wetheral was suffering severe nervous excitation as he entered her sitting-room, for Christobelle's protracted absence boded evil to her hopes. She

looked earnestly in her husband's face, to read its import.

"You have seen Bell, you have seen Bell—tell me at once, if I am to be the mother of Lady Farnborough."

"Gertrude," replied her husband, calmly, "do not destroy your health by these nervous excitements."

"Sir John, my nerves are excited by the conduct of my children. Am I the mother of the future Duchess of Forfar? Am I to be the proud mother of a child raised to the very pinnacle of worldly grandeur?"

"You will be the mother of a child truly happy in her worldly prospects, if your mind will but look rationally upon its promises, my dear Gertrude."

"Am I to be the mother of Lady Farnborough?" repeated the excited parent.

"Our daughter has not committed the base folly of accepting one man, when her heart belonged to another, Gertrude."

"Did *I* not do so before her, Sir John? I never repented *my* marriage!"

"It might be so, my love, but Chrystal never possessed your ambition, to soar over affection and honour, through its cold dictates."

"Am I to understand Bell has refused Lord Farnborough, Sir John? Is that the reading of your words? Pray speak it in intelligible words."

"Christobelle has declined his lordship, Gertrude. Her heart preferred Spottiswoode, and my concurrence went with it."

"Perhaps you will convey a message from me to the future Lady Spottiswoode of Alverton, among the flat meadows of Worcestershire, Sir John," replied his lady, in the calm tones of suppressed anger. "Tell my Lady Spottiswoode it is my request she never presumes to appear before me during the days of her singlehood."

"Gertrude, Gertrude," exclaimed her husband, "is this request a fit message from a mother to her child?"

"I had always a dislike to scenes," observed her ladyship, "therefore, I shall not reproach Miss Wetheral with her deceptive conduct in allowing attentions from a quarter which I never countenanced, and after my express commands to avoid them. I ever deprecated scenes before Lady Kerrison — but her violent spirit scorned restraint. She gave me deep pain; and Lady

Ennismore's banishment has caused me pain—but this stroke lies far deeper in my heart!"

Lady Wetheral became all nerve: her whole person was in a nervous trembling. Her husband failed in every effort to tranquillize her spirit.

"You may dilate upon the supreme excellence of your favourite Spottiswoode, my love, and you may assure me your daughter is an enviable and a happy being; but I know she has cast aside a ducal coronet, to wed the poor baronet of Alverton! I will see her no more. I will never see her again."

"My dear Gertrude, be tranquil, and be rational." Sir John Wetheral never could be persuaded to lose his temper.

"I am perfectly tranquil and calm, Sir John. I am perfectly tranquil, and very rational in my commands, when I persist in banishing my unnatural child from my sight. Miss Wetheral has taken her measures, and I assert mine. We do not meet again."

"This is wrong, a wicked wrong, towards an innocent child, Gertrude!"

"She is very innocent," retorted Lady Wetheral, with bitterness. "Her innocence has caused her to oppose my wishes, and to dare

that which her sisters never presumed to do. They never contravened my views, nor thwarted my wishes in their establishment, and they married well!"

"Was it *well* with Clara?" demanded her husband, with earnestness of manner as startling as it was novel—"was it *well* with Clara? Did she not quit her home clandestinely, to become the wife of Kerrison?—miserable in her short career, and sudden in her death, was she happy? Is Clara to be held forth as an evidence of maternal care, in such a momentous concern?"

"Forbear, Sir John, forbear!" cried his lady.

"Nay, but Gertrude, has it been well with Julia, whom you taught to fly at quarry so distasteful? Wedded to imbecility—banished from her home and country, unseen and unheard of—is she, too, an evidence of your talent in contriving establishments?"

"I tell you," exclaimed her ladyship, "Julia is an earl's wife; and Clara's position was high and grandly placed, but her own hand plucked her down. Who can reproach *me*?"

"I will not reproach you, Gertrude, but I counsel you to spare this last poor child. Remember only your fatal mistakes, and do not

add a third victim. I will not allow Christobelle to be sacrificed to your ambition."

"Ring for Bevan, I am very ill — ring for Bevan, but let no one else come near me. I am *not* hard-hearted! Clara called me hard-hearted: I am not hard-hearted! I am a disappointed, deceived mother. Where is Bevan?"

Mrs. Bevan appeared with the remedies, which time had taught her to dispense as judiciously as her predecessor, Mrs. Daniel Higgins, had done; but Lady Wetheral's attack threatened a longer continuance than usual. She would fain have retired to her own room, but Sir John perceived her inability to move without assistance: her ladyship trembled excessively. He bore her in his arms to her bed-side, and Mrs. Bevan, after assisting her lady to repose, proceeded to close the shutters, and exclude the bright sunbeams. Lady Wetheral became still more nervous.

"Bevan, let me have light—let me have light! If I cannot see the sun, it will be darkness of body and mind. Don't leave me, Bevan. Sir John, where are you?"

Sir John stood near, in a state of offended alarm: his mind was discomposed—it never became angry.

"Sir John, I cannot remain at Fairlee: take me back to Wetheral. Bell has destroyed my health. I was quite well till this wretched match, which has destroyed all my plans, and thrown down all my hopes! It has made me ill—worse than ever!"

It was not in the power of reason, much less in Sir John Wetheral's power, to check the indignant feelings which affected his lady's mind upon the subject of Lord Farnborough's refusal. Each attempt to argue away their violence did but increase the evil. Nothing could induce her ladyship to receive Christobelle at her bed-side, or hear a word pleaded in her defence. Christobelle's attachment to Sir John Spottiswoode, and her subsequent refusal to accept Lord Farnborough's proposal, appeared to destroy the ties of affection which had never been closely woven together, for his ladyship declared her daughter's presence would kill her upon the spot. The sad event which occasioned her flight from England, faded under the shock of Lord Farnborough's dismissal. Scotland would be to her sickened heart a remembrance of misery. Either Christobelle or herself must quit the shores of the now desolate and cold Lochleven, upon whose bosom she had once

enjoyed such bright anticipations. All was ended, and joy had closed her brilliant wings for ever. This was an irrecoverable stroke.

Sir John Wetheral did not conceal from Christobelle the mandate which banished her from her mother's presence; and the consolation of Spottiswoode's presence was indeed necessary to soothe her distress of heart. Christobelle would cheerfully have contributed to her parent's comfort, had her wishes extended to less than the sacrifice of all happiness; but surely it was not reprehensible to withhold a shadow of hope, when her heart was not with Lord Farnborough! Surely it was not right to turn from the man she loved, when her affections were his beyond the power of recal, and when the voice of ambition alone demanded it! True, Julia and Clara's views were moulded by her mother's spirit, but then their hearts were untouched, and their unshackled affections might submit to her dictation. Ambition also impelled them to meet her wishes, and no private feeling struggled within their soul to deaden its influence; but Christobelle was another's!—she might suffer, but she could not change!

Sir John Spottiswoode believed that time would soften Lady Wetheral's displeasure, but

stobelle knew too well the bitterness of the ppointment, to lay such unction to her soul. she ever been a favourite with her lady- —had her youth been pleasant in her sight, might have hoped to obtain an influence ugh the operation of time, sufficient to t a reconciliation in favour of her present chment. But that had never been the case. birth was considered out of time—her sex leased her — her education was uninterest- to her mother's mind. It was only at in- als, and under particular circumstances, Christobelle received any commendation, it expired with the cause which elicited its h. Christobelle felt assured her mother ld never forgive the wound inflicted upon ambition. She felt assured her mother ld never forgive the dismissal of Lord Farn- ugh.

ir John Wetheral decided upon quitting lee as soon as his lady felt equal to under- the fatigue of a journey; and he also ex- sed a wish that a twelvemonth should elapse Christobelle became the wife of Spottis- de. "His daughter," he said, "was young, a twelvemonth might effect a change in her her's feelings. It was Christobelle's duty

to make some concessions to an offended parent, and twelvemonths would operate as a fair trial of the constancy of her own nature."

Christobelle submitted most willingly to this arrangement. The least wish of her father had ever been her rule of conduct, and his indulgence would have won obedience, had his wishes extended the period of the engagement. But Sir John required no painful sacrifices, no useless trials. Spottiswoode might visit Christobelle whenever his avocations enabled him to become a guest at Lidham, and he trusted time would soften Lady Wetheral's disappointed views. He dared not pronounce upon its certainty, but they had a right to hope the best.

The continued mortification which embittered Christobelle's repose, by Lady Wetheral's harsh mandate, at last induced Sir John to resolve upon his daughter quitting Fairlee. It was a painful and perpetual grievance to Christobelle, to know that her mother was ill, and confined to her apartments, yet that *she* was not suffered to alleviate her confinement, or attend her. It was a grief which the affectionate attentions of her lover could not control, and which her father's soothing presence did not lessen. Her appetite declined and her spirits fled. Spottis-

woode also became dispirited and uneasy in witnessing her regrets, and Sir John Wetheral, alarmed at his daughter's increasing depression, wrote to Mr. Boscawen to meet them at Edinburgh, and conduct Christobelle to his own home for a season.

It was judged, that absence from a scene so painful, and the society of Isabel, would cheer her spirits, and soften her present sorrow; while, under the protection of Mr. Boscawen, she might receive the visits of Sir John Spottiswoode, and move among the friends she loved, and whom she had not seen for some years. Spottiswoode would remain some time longer at Fairlee, and it might be, that his lengthened sojourn in the north would produce a favourable effect upon the invalid's mind. It might be, that the knowledge of her daughter's withdrawal would rouse her, and if any human being could amuse and soften a harsh determination in Lady Wetheral's soul, that being was the good and kind Spottiswoode.

Christobelle wandered each day with her lover through the scenes of their early walks, and if the exercise failed to bring the bloom into her cheek, yet she was happy while leaning on his arm, and listening to his hopes. They

spoke of Alverton in the rocky bower which she was so soon to quit. Christobelle looked upon the water, and she thought of the years of careless freedom in which she had wandered among those beautiful scenes with Janet for her sole companion. She thought of the Douglas Isle, where she had first seen Lord Farnborough, and the spot from whence she had waved her plaid at their parting. Christobelle thought of her gradually increasing passion for Spottiswoode — the hopes and fears of St. Mungo's Isle—the pangs of jealous feelings which she endured when Fanny Ponsonby engrossed the attention of him she loved :—she thought, too, of her present situation, the betrothed of Spottiswoode, yet the banished one from her mother's side. Would that mother, indeed, continue to drive her child from her presence, or might she yet receive her smile and hear her welcome! Should she be indeed the happy wife of Spottiswoode, and become, as he fondly styled her, the bright star of Alverton? Christobelle wept. Spottiswoode pressed her to his heart.

"My own Chrystal, this silent grief destroys me, for it is through me you suffer. Would to Heaven you were safe at Brierly with your friends, and that I was with you! I shall soon

follow you, for here I cannot remain without you. I should hear you sigh, and see your weeping figure in every spot where we have been together. I shall look like the ghost of departed Pleasure. You will leave me on Friday, my Chrystal."

"For a few days only, Spottiswoode."

"I shall know you are in kind protection, dearest. You will be with the best of men in Boscawen's company, and you love him as well as Isabel. Her children will amuse you. You will see the Pynsents. You will hardly have time to think of *me*, Chrystal."

"I will try to forget you sometimes; I wonder if I shall succeed."

"You have nephews and nieces to engross your attention; you will be joked by Mrs. Pynsent, Chrystal, for fancying your poor lover. Every body will crowd round you, to admire your loveliness, and wonder at your graceful figure; and yet I must not be there to witness it. What shall *I* do without you?"

The tears sprung to Chrystal's eyes; she endeavoured to disperse them, but they fell unbidden. Her mind was weakened by recent events. She clasped her hands, and exclaimed,—

"Oh, do not say you will suffer, Spottiswoode, by my absence."

"No, no, my love," he replied, with fond endearments, "I will not think of our little trial. You will go from me on Friday; but are you not my own betrothed bride, and are we not one in heart and hand? You will rejoice your friends, and be rejoiced in meeting them. I shall also rejoice, in the knowledge of your happiness. Our thoughts will meet often and often in our absence; and then, my Chrystal, we shall meet again in peace. I cannot and will not remain a week absent from you."

Christobelle smiled again to think their separation was not eternal. How many attached hearts had been torn asunder, while they were mourning over the parting of a few short days! How many hearts had bid a long farewell, while they should meet again and be in peace! Again she leaned against her lover's shoulder, and her thoughts were of grateful thanks. She was not called to severe affliction — she was not beloved by a man whose birth or character was repugnant to her friends, and to whom her happiness was a source of discomfort and disgust. Even her mother had not deprecated Spottiswoode: his offence in her eyes arose from having won her

daughter from Lord Farnborough. Her father loved him, and approved her attachment. Yes, Christobelle had reason to be thankful to the hand which ministered so wisely for her happiness. Her mother would not always be harsh; surely she might in time be summoned into her presence! She would never be forgiven; she never *had* been loved; and the slight cord of affection was broken for ever between them: but they might meet without pain, she hoped, on her mother's part; and she herself would exert unceasing efforts to win her into complacency. Her mother *must* love Spottiswoode, when time should soften her remembrance of Lord Farnborough's attentions.

Christobelle spoke of Fanny Ponsonby to her companion, now that her heart was at rest; and alluded to her emotions in St. Mungo's Isle. Spottiswoode had, from the first hour of their introduction, discovered her predilection for Lord Farnborough.

"I could trace it, Chrystal, in the agitated and close attention she bestowed upon yourself, and in her anxiety to remove from your vicinity. I saw the distressed feelings of her heart, as she watched the engrossed attention of Farnborough at dinner: and I felt for her sufferings during

the singing. I felt for her and for myself at that moment, Chrystal, for I also fancied you approved his lordship."

"How could you think so, Spottiswoode?"

"Lady Wetheral's words were in my ears, Chrystal, and I had relinquished all hope for myself."

"What a day of misery it was to me!" Christobelle exclaimed, as she thought of all she had endured. "Fanny Ponsonby's feelings were all echoed by my own."

"It was a painful day to many, Chrystal; but to us it has proved a blessing, for it confessed our sentiments at once, and prepared the way for our mutual understanding. Had you not expressed disapprobation of Lord Farnborough, I had not dared to tell my feelings. Was it not a blessing, my love?"

"But poor Fanny Ponsonby, what will be *her* destiny?" Christobelle asked, as she returned the pressure of Spottiswoode's hand. "What will be her fate in her attachment?"

"Miss Ponsonby has sown her seed among thorns," he replied, with feeling, "and her heart must wrestle with its feelings, unless she becomes his wife. Lord Farnborough may turn to Miss Ponsonby, since you have rejected him, and she

may become the envied Lady Farnborough; but she will only sink into a neglected wife. He cannot make a woman happy."

"Oh! if I had seen him with my mother's eyes, and fallen a sacrifice!" observed Christobelle, with a shudder.

"I should have quitted England, Chrystal. I would not have witnessed your misery, or remained within hearing of your gradual decay. You could not long live under his harsh treatment, and I could not have borne to hear the world remark upon your pale cheek and faded form."

"How grateful I am! how happy I ought to be, Spottiswoode! When you come to see me at Brierly, and I do not suffer daily under my mother's angry prohibition, you will find me so changed and happy! When I think of Lord Farnborough, I turn to you with such grateful delight! Yes, Spottiswoode, I *will* be happy!"

And Christobelle exerted herself to be happy, even the few days which intervened between her expressed gratitude and her long farewell to Fairlee. She sat hour after hour upon the terrace, with her father and Spottiswoode, looking with deep interest upon the lake, the scene of all her pleasures, while she was happy in ignorance of a deep affection, and the scene of suffer-

ing during the stirring incidents which had awakened her heart to the strife of worldly sorrow. Lochleven was endeared to Christobelle by a thousand recollections, by the enjoyments of her young age, and by the happy hours passed by the side of Spottiswoode. She was going to the south, to a new scene that would be changed in its aspect; gayer, full of friends, and still blest by the society of him she loved. But would it be to her like the grand Lochleven? — that shelter from the world's cares? that spot where she had enjoyed such long tranquillity? Adieu for a long, long time, the cloud-capped mountains, the heather hills, the placid waters! farewell the islands on its bosom — the groves, the far Cona! Farewell the stirring breeze, the lonely Eilan na Corak—the repose, the grandeur of the shores of Lochleven!

Christobelle endured much, ere she set forth with her father from Fairlee. She bore her parting interview with Spottiswoode with great intrepidity; but she wept at her mother's obdurate determination not to see her before she quitted the parental roof. Sir John Wetherl soothed her as she gazed upon the lake, till it vanished from her aching sight: and he prophesied that her trial would not be lengthened

beyond her power to endure it. He spoke kindly and well to her overpowered spirit, of the sorrows which must accompany a progress through life, and of the consolation which attended a patient and praying spirit. He did not consider it right to allow Spottiswoode to accompany them, as her mother evinced such decided repugnance to the match; but at Brierly, Christobelle might enjoy her lover's society in peace; and he would accompany his lady to Wetheral as soon as she expressed a wish to set forth on the long journey. New scenes, new faces, and a new set of ideas would, he hoped, drive gloomy fancies from her mind, and bring comfort to all parties. She was on her road to Isabel, and with her and Boscawen she must enjoy the calm pleasures of domestic happiness. They would lead her to agreeable thoughts, and Spottiswoode would speedily add his society to the enjoyments of Brierly.

Such was Sir John Wetheral's reasoning, and its effects were apparent upon Christobelle's spirits. She gradually recovered cheerfulness under his indulgent soothings, and she could even admire the changing scenery which varied their route to Edinburgh. Mr. Boscawen was true to his appointment; they found him at the

place of rendezvous, ready to conduct Christobelle to the county of her birth, and induct her once more into the domicile which had sheltered her so kindly years before.

Mr. Boscawen was surprised at her growth, and wondered at the girl who had glided into womanhood so rapidly. He thought her features bore a strong resemblance to her unfortunate sister Clara; but he politely assured her, her manner was entirely her own. She was no longer, he said, "the gay little half-grown girl, who had delighted to nurse her nephew under the mulberry tree at Brierly. She must be looked upon in a very different phase; and he feared the quiet haunts of Brierly would ring with the charms of the beautiful Miss Wetheral. He was pleased to think she possessed a protector whose claims would at once put an end to the fearful contention of furious rivals." Christobelle's blushes were the only answers she could give to the agreeable remarks of Mr. Boscawen.

Sir John Wetheral's absence would not be of long continuance, therefore Christobelle did not sorrow much as she bade him adieu. She prayed him to speak of her to her mother, and to express her deepest regret at having incurred her displeasure. She prayed for her pardon, and that

they might meet again in reconciliation. She looked to her forgiveness with anxious desire, with a fervent and unceasing hope. She embraced her dear father, and bade him remember her kindly, affectionately, to the friend she had left at Fairlee, and then she gave her hand to Mr. Boscawen.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

How delightedly did the eye of Christobelle rest upon the matronly form of Isabel! She was clasped in her arms, as she descended the steps of the chaise at Brierly.

"Well, I never saw such a beautiful creature in my life! My dear Christobelle, who would have thought you would turn out so very pretty? My dear Mr. Boscawen, were you not surprised at Christobelle's beauty, when you first saw her?"

"I was not so overcome at your sister's handsome face, as I am astonished at Isabel's neglect of her long-absent husband," replied Mr. Boscawen, smiling. Isabel flew towards him.

"I can't think how I came to be so wicked; but, indeed, it was the sight of my sister's face. My dear Boscawen, I have so longed for your return, and so have the children! I was obliged to tell the dear things papa was gone a long way off, for some cakes and their pretty aunt, or they

would not have been comforted. I did not know what hour you would arrive, therefore I was wise enough not to say a word to them about it."

"They shall be summoned after dinner, Isabel. We are hungry travellers now, and a meal will be most gratefully welcomed."

"My love, ring the bell, and order it in now, if you please, while I escort my sister to her room. Follow me, dear Christobelle. Well, I declare I never saw such a change in a human being! You are tall and handsome, and have such beautiful ringlets! I shall certainly have ringlets too. I can't fancy you are the little, jumping Chrystal, who was dressed out so fine at my wedding, five or six years ago. Well — and don't you think *I* am changed?"

Isabel was changed. Her sylph-like figure had swelled into a stout form: her waist had increased materially in breadth, and her dress was rather disordered.

"The children are so playful, Chrystal, that my collars have always a ragged appearance; and corsets of any kind are so very painful, because I am getting large, that I never wear them. Boscawen, though, does not mind my appearance: he is not particular. He allows me to do just what I like, and I am so happy! Ah! do

you remember my geography days, Chrystal? How I detested that dreadful map of the world! I am determined my little Bell shall be happy and ignorant, as I was before her. She is called Bell after you, dear—not your long name, but simply Bell. I hope she will be as pretty as you; but what does it signify? Who can be happier than I am, with my broad waist and rumpled collars?"

The moment the servants had withdrawn, after dessert was placed upon the table, Isabel continued her happy prattle.

"I have so much to tell you, of one kind or the other, dear Bell, that I don't know where to begin. What shall I tell first, my dear Boscawen? Oh! Bell, such things are whispered of Julia!—I don't believe a word of them—not one word. However, you will find Anna Maria more French than ever, for the Count de Nolis has been staying every Christmas at Hatton, and Félicé does lay on the rouge terribly. It's quite amusing to hear Tom Pynsent boast of his wife's bloom, when it's rouge all the time. I think I wrote you word, that odd Mrs. Hancock had a paralytic stroke some time ago?"

"No, indeed, Isabel, I never heard of it."

"Didn't you? Oh! it's the case, I assure

you — her mouth is all on one side. Poor Miss Tabitha is not dead yet, Bell: I don't think she means to die at all; and Mrs. Ward writes word, she finds fault with every thing, poor soul, that is said or done. Shall I ring for the darlings, my dear Boscawen? I am sure Chrystal is dying to see her little boy, whom she nursed so carefully. Ring the bell twice, my love, and the little wild things will soon rush in."

"Do not give Tom wine, Isabel; I have a dislike to children taking wine so early in life."

"No, my dear Boscawen, certainly not. I think, with you, that wine is very improper for children—but little Tom has such a winning way of coaxing his poor mother!"

The children soon burst into the room, and ran bounding round the table. Isabel was all triumphant pleasure. "Now, Charles—my dear Charles, go quietly to papa, and ask him how he does, and whether the cakes are come from merry Scotland. Ah, ha, Charley goes for his cakes. Tom, my beauty, come to mamma; and Bell, go to your aunt—your new aunt, and admire her pretty hair."

Christobelle endeavoured to attract her little fat niece to her side, but she hid her face in Isabel's lap.

"Oh, Bell, I'm ashamed of you!—your pretty aunt, too—oh, fie! My dear Tommy, don't touch mamma's glass. No, no wine, Tommy—papa says no. A few strawberries, my dear little boy, and a biscuit, but no wine."

Tommy, however, advanced his mother's wine-glass to his lips, watching her countenance with a cunning glance.

"Now, my little, good Tommy, mamma will be angry, very angry, if you do what she tells you not to do. Bell, my love, go to your aunt, like a good girl."

Isabel took some pains to persuade her little girl to raise her head, but her appeals were useless. In the mean time, Tommy had silently quaffed the remainder of the contents of her glass. Mr. Boscawen rose, and took him from Isabel's knee.

"My dear Boscawen, what are you going to do with Tommy? he is very good with me, my love."

"I am going to banish him, Isabel, for disobedience."

"Oh, my dear Boscawen, it was the least little drop of wine in the world! it was scarcely a teaspoonful — pray don't punish Tommy for that little drop, my love."

"The disobedience was the same in the action, Isabel. I shall send him into the nursery. I shall take him there myself."

Isabel's eyes suffused, as Mr. Boscawen left the dining-room with the crying recreant Tommy. She turned to her sister.

"Oh! Chrystal, was it not severe to carry away that dear child, for one drop of wine only?"

"Boscawen was quite right, my dear Isabel."

"Do you really think so? Do you really think he was right to banish the darling child, when it was such a pretty, coaxing trick? Did you see his little, cunning, dear eyes?"

"Boscawen justly thinks, Isabel, that cunning habits and disobedience will increase, if it is not checked."

"Oh! I hope it won't increase—dear child—I should be sorry to see him grow sly." Mr. Boscawen returned. "My love, did Tommy cry? Was he very much hurt—poor dear? Did you leave him crying?"

"My dear Isabel, you have brought this upon him, by not checking disobedience in the first instance. You have allowed the child twice to steal your wine."

"My dear Boscawen — steal! indeed, that sounds dreadful! I hope my children will never

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"My dear Boscawen — steal! indeed, that sounds dreadful! I hope my children will never

steal! It was indeed my fault! Poor, dear child!—I dare say he is crying dreadfully now. Let me beg for my child, Boscawen."

"Let him remain where he is, Isabel: he has been very naughty."

"But I have taught him to steal, and I ought to suffer for him, dear Boscawen. Let me go to my child, my love!" The tears stood in Isabel's eyes, and Boscawen was still under their influence. He soothed his lady as fondly as when in earlier days she wept for the drooping ostrich feather.

"My dear Isabel, when we retire into the drawing-room, your child shall come down again. Don't weep, my love. I cannot wonder at your fondness, but he was very naughty. Wait a few moments, Isabel, and the child shall join us in the drawing-room. Don't let me see you weep —stay, I will bring him down to you."

Isabel smiled, and little Tommy was restored to her arms, as he entered the drawing-room. Mr. Boscawen felt he had acted unwisely by his child; but how could he resist Isabel in tears? Things were totally changed at Brierly. A tear from the bright blue eye of Isabel melted Boscawen's best resolves, and operated against the excellence of his own system of education.

Isabel held the reins of government in her hands. She never argued with her husband—she never offered a word of opposition to his wishes—but she ruled by submission, and won his acquiescence by her tears and gentle self-upbraidings. Fortunately, her children possessed her own sweet disposition, which defied indulgence, or they might have suffered through Isabel's inability to check their budding faults. As it was, they loved her too well to persist in offending a parent so devoted; and it must have proved a very serious offence, ere the light-hearted Isabel could lament conduct which was ever palliated by her affectionate heart. She was indeed the happiest of wives and mothers.

Mr. Boscawen and Christobelle resumed their occupations instinctively, as if years had not intervened since they last walked and read together at Brierly. Isabel was delighted.

"Ah, there you go again!—read, read, talk, talk, all day long. I like to hear you argue, when I have time to devote to you both; but the children require so much attention, and the dear little things love to be with me so often, that dear Boscawen has been a great deal alone, haven't you, Boscawen? It is such a pleasure to have

you here, Chrystal—my poor, dear husband won't have to endure my ignorance."

"Who says my Isabel is ignorant?" said Mr. Boscawen, patting his lady's shoulder affectionately.

"Yes, dear Boscawen, I am very ignorant, and very unfit for you; but I do very well to play with the darlings, and superintend every thing but their education—*that* you will do, except for poor little Bell: let her be happy and ignorant, Boscawen. If she is half as happy as her mother, she will not require knowledge — only her husband and children. I never wish for any thing beyond you and them." Isabel cast an upward and affectionate look at Boscawen, who bent his long figure to kiss his laughing wife.

Mr. Boscawen told Christobelle he had engaged to take her for a day or two to Hatton. The Pynsents were very anxious to see her, and Mrs. Pynsent had made it a point with him to bring the "tall, gawky, good-looking girl" to her, as soon as she had rested a few days at Brierly. The Charles Spottiswoodes, also, were wishing to see her again, to contemplate the improvement which five years must have effected in her appearance. The name of Spottiswoode brought blushes into the face of Christobelle.

"My dear Bell," exclaimed Isabel, with laughing delight, "how droll it is to think you have a lover; when I saw you last, you were such a bit of a girl! Sir John Spottiswoode is just the man I would have chosen for you—just the very person I should have singled out—is he not, Boscawen?—just the sort of man, with curling dark hair and high forehead, that you ought to like, dear Chrystal!"

"*I* had not dark curling hair, Isabel?" said Boscawen, smiling—"I had not a high forehead, had I?"

"My dear Boscawen, your hair was always dreadfully wiry, and I thought you very plain, but I liked you for all that, you know."

"Then why *ought* Chrystal to choose and love such things, my Isabel?"

"Ah! I dare say I am talking nonsense again," cried the humble Isabel, "for I should really recommend no one who does not resemble you, dear Boscawen. I should advise every woman to wait till they could find a kind, dear man, like yourself, and then they would not care about wiry hair, or...." Isabel hesitated and coloured.

"Say on, Isabel." Mr. Boscawen looked amused.

"I was going to say, they would not mind

great long legs. Don't be angry, my love, with me."

Mr. Boscawen laughed. "You see, Isabel, the triumph of good sense over mere personal advantages. You cannot be ignorant, since you chose me in spite of my deficiencies. I hope all your young acquaintance may exhibit your indifference to mere good looks. Miss Wetheral, when shall we visit Hatton? Isabel, will you join the party?"

"I wish I could drive over with you, my love; but Charly is cutting a double-tooth, and I think little Bell is not quite well. I think I cannot leave my little ones two days, Boscawen!"

"Then Chrystal and myself will depart to-morrow for Hatton," said Boscawen, smiling, with gratified feelings, at his wife's love of her home and her little ones.

"Yes, Bell will amuse you, dear Boscawen, and you will not miss *me*. You can talk away upon history and the arts and sciences, and enjoy the novelty of a clever companion, for once. I am only fit to nurse my children."

"You are only fit to be a very excellent creature, and to be my dear little roundabout wife," exclaimed Boscawen; and Isabel looked so happy! It was delightful to witness the joyous expression

which revelled in her looks, whenever she spoke with her husband and children. It was such a contrast to the Isabel whom Christobelle remembered, low-spirited, in her dressing-room at Wetheral, pining over "Burnet's Reformation!" It was such a contrast to the Isabel who watched in alarm the fond, but searching, glance of her excellent, elderly husband!—Christobelle told her so, when they were alone. She laughed.

"I remember, Bell, how frightened I used to be, and there was no cause for it! Boscawen was always kind, only I was so unwilling to receive improvement, and then I fancied his anxiety was annoying. When Miss Tabitha left Brierly, every thing was comfortable to me; for then, you know, there was no one to point out my faults. But, Chrystal, tell me now all about John Spottiswoode. Boscawen told me not to be curious, but I am *very* curious. I want to know how it all began, and why mamma is so foolish about Lord Farnborough."

Christobelle recapitulated her story to Isabel, who wondered, and was pleased, and wept, by turns, as her sister recounted all her sufferings. She clasped her arms round Christobelle.

"Never mind, Chrystal, never mind; and every thing will end as it should do. Every

body knows mamma's matches have turned out shockingly; and John Spottiswoode is so loved by all his relations, so good to his mother and sister, that you are fortunate in attracting him; but you are so very handsome, dear Chrystal, you would attract every one, high and low. People are now scandalizing poor Julia, and pointing at her and Colonel Neville; but I will never believe that Julia would do wrong, though I dare say she is very unhappy, poor dear girl."

"What does Boscawen think, Isabel?"

"Oh, Boscawen never thought *that* match would answer. He did not like the Dowager's manners and character; and he said to me, at Julia's wedding, that if my sister fell from her high estate, the two mothers would answer for it hereafter. He said, too, that Julia was the victim of two machinating Machiavels. Of course, he meant mamma and the Dowager. Lord Selgrave was always disliked as a cruel, disagreeable boy, I hear; so he would have made you a sad husband, in spite of being Earl of Farnborough, and a trumpery Duke in expectancy."

Isabel's remarks only corroborated the observations of Spottiswoode, and Christobelle believed herself indeed saved from ruin, though

she paid a severe penalty for her escape, in the angry prohibition of her mother's disappointed views. Her present pain, she felt assured, was far more bearable than the misery of an unhappy matrimony; and she was grateful beyond expression to know that she was given to a man, so loved and so well appreciated as Spottiswoode was, among her nearest friends. Their approbation must be balm to her heart; and, when her mother heard how all lips concurred to praise him, would she continue her ungenerous dislike to her presence? Would she persist in holding back her consent, and still pertinaciously revenge upon her head her dismissal of a man so little respected as Lord Farnborough? Christobelle hoped not in fear and trembling; she *would* hope. As her dear father observed, she had a right to hope that her prayers would be heard and answered, if she persevered in the path of principle.

Christobelle's spirits were considerably improved, by viewing the happy lot of Isabel, in the enjoyment of those tranquil domestic scenes which were so adapted to her taste and nature. In Mr. Boscawen, she met the highly-informed mind which imparted knowledge with a flow so gentle, that it did not startle or confound the listening neophite. His was a mind which fer-

tilized as it stole along, improving all, and delighting every ear, but the ear of Isabel. To her the stream of his intellect flowed by, without a wish to understand, or kindle under its influence, one spark of sympathetic fire. Yet she gloried in her husband, and their life was peaceful and happy.

It is temper which creates the bliss of home, or disturbs its comfort. It is not in the collision of intellect, that domestic peace loves to nestle. Her home is in the forbearing nature—in the yielding spirit—in the calm pleasures of a mild disposition, anxious to give and receive happiness. In the sweet humility of Isabel, and in the indulgent forbearance of Boscawen, peace dwelt undisturbed by rival animosity; and she did not suffer those alarms which chase her timid presence from the hearth of the contentious, and from the bosom of the envious. Such was the blessed comfort and true charm of Brierly.

Isabel was all bustle and kindness, as her husband and sister prepared to depart for Hatton. "Had dear Boscawen forgotten his shaving-apparatus?—his tooth-brush? Was he sure he had his eye-glass? She hoped they would return very soon; but, at any rate, till they made their appearance again, she should live in the

nursery. Dear Boscawen was to be sure and remember every thing that was said of Chrystal, for she was sure every one would admire her pretty face; and Chrystal was particularly to be amused with Tom Pynsent's remarks upon Anna Maria's borrowed bloom. Where was Charly and Bell? They had begged to ride as far as the Lodges, and she would put on her hat and meet them."

Isabel ran off to the nursery, and returned with her three children. Tommy was a soldier, and a drum was appended to his neck. Charly had a new fiddle in his hand, and little Bell was sorted with a trumpet, that she might approach as nearly as possible to her brother's style of amusements. Isabel placed them in the carriage. "Now, Charly and Tommy, don't make a great noise; and don't snatch your sister's trumpet from her, my loves. Papa will put you out at the Lodge, and mamma will be ready to take you. Charly, don't squeeze your aunt's pretty dress; and, Bell, my love, don't push back your bonnet—I don't like to see little girls push back their bonnet. Chrystal, give my love to every body, and say I could not leave the little ones; I should have done nothing but think of them.

My dear Boscawen, come back very soon; and, Chrystal, don't stay long."

"Any thing more, Isabel?" demanded Boscawen. "Any thing about curled heads and high foreheads?"

"Ah, you are laughing at me, now, wicked man! I believe I talk a great deal of nonsense, but little Bell will not have her mother's infirmities, I hope."

"I hope she will possess all of them," replied Boscawen, "and only inherit half her mother's sweet temper. She will then have enough to raise my pride."

Isabel laughed gaily, and blushed at her husband's energetic speech; but she kissed her hand, with such a happy expression of countenance, as they drove from the door! How pleasing was the sight, and how it tended to raise the spirits of Christobelle!

The children did not make more noise than usual, as they drove to the Lodge; and little Bell only lost her trumpet and her temper once, during the transit. They were then deposited with the Lodge-keeper till their mamma should join them, and Mr. Boscawen proceeded on his journey. They stopped to change horses at Bridgnorth, and, as they remained some minutes at

the Crown, Christobelle remembered the appearance of Thompson, at her first visit there, and the cause of her sudden recal home. It was after the luckless elopement of Clara, that she was hurried to Wetheral, to be the companion of her mother, under circumstances most annoying to herself, connected with the very marriage she had promoted so anxiously. Christobelle was now herself the object of her anger, for declining to enter into an engagement, hateful to her heart and principles! How and when would her mother's soul be divested of its ambitious worldly anxieties?

Christobelle's reception at Hatton was gratifying to her feelings in the highest degree. She was surrounded by affectionate greetings and congratulations. Mrs. Pynsent wrung her hand with kind violence.

"Hollo, Miss Bell, so we have got you back again, and I won't ask where Sir Jacky is, because and because. Got your blushes still, Miss Bell! So much the better — and I'll be bound you have brought back your good heart. No, not your heart, but your good temper. Here, Bobby, come and look at our new beauty. I tell you what, Miss Bell, you are a finer girl than any of your sisters; not even that unfortu-

nate, poor Lady Kerrison came up to you in good looks."

"Come, come, I'll match my little wife with the best of you," exclaimed Tom, more good-humoured, more red-faced than ever. "I'll match my little wife's bloom even against the handsome 'Bell.' Bell's fine colour comes and fades away again in an instant; but Anna Maria's cherry cheeks are everlasting. Look at them!" Tom Pynsent dragged his laughing wife before Christobelle.

"Ay, ay," replied Mrs. Pynsent, winking her eye, "we know Anna Maria's bloom is the right sort—renewable at pleasure. Look at Bobby, screwing up his eyes. — What's the matter, Bobby?"

Mr. Pynsent never did, and never could appear to advantage, under the ridicule which his lady's address always threw around him; but he did not observe the *de haut en bas* manner, or else long custom had taken away all feeling upon the extraordinary nature of her remarks. Probably he had long felt assured the evil was irremediable. His own manner was very courteous, but Mr. Pynsent was not a man of many words. He surrendered all speech quietly into the hands of his lady, and contented himself

with silently listening to the remarks of others, without adventuring his own. Mr. Pynsent took no notice of her question.

"What's the matter, Bobby?" repeated Mrs. Pynsent. "Can't you admire Miss Bell, without screwing up your poor old pair of greys? It's a fair face to look upon, isn't it, after gazing upon poor Sal. Miss Bell, poor Sally Hancock is in a precious pickle."

"I heard of it from Isabel."

"You never saw such a poor thing!—all over with Sal, Miss Bell; but the poor creature is so cast down! She has a room here now, to be amused by the children, and watch their antics; and, luckily, you know, she can't speak plain, to put bad words in their mouths. Poor Sally! I could not let her remain at Lea, in that state; and I think she is very comfortable here with the children and Bobby."

"Where are the children? Where is Tom, and where is Moll and Bab?" asked Tom Pynsent. "Bell must see the children — Bell will want to see the children — I thought I heard them screaming just now, somewhere."

"They were fighting over a brush just now in the second hall," replied his mother, "and they nearly killed the baby. I expected the poor

little thing would have got a broken head in the scuffle, but he fought like a fury, and sent his fist into Moll's eye."

"They do fight dreadfully," observed Anna Maria.

"Let them alone, I won't have them checked," cried their grandmother; "when they have had thumps enough, they will be quiet. Moll is worse than the baby; but their spirits are so high, I won't have them cowed."

"Bell," said Tom Pynsent, with a tone and look of honest pride, "you have pretty scamps for your relations. Tom rides a Shetland after the hounds, and Moll runs up a tree like a young squirrel. Bab and the baby are improving, too, by their example. Tally ho! I hear them!" he ran to the door, and opened it. "Tally ho, there! Tom and Moll, bring the litter this way!"

The four children burst into the drawing-room like a pack of hounds, and the baby, a stout child of a year old toddling in, he fell down, and the others ran over him. Tom Pynsent caught up the sturdy boy.

"Don't give tongue, you young rascal, but fight 'em, Bill — here, double your fists at them all."

The child mechanically closed his little fists, and his father placed him before Miss Bab.

"Battle her well, Bill, rattle her."

The child, who had not yet cast his cap, dealt a blow at his sister, which Miss Bab returned by knocking him down. The child did not attempt to cry at the blow, but, rising from the floor, he again doubled his infantine fists for the battle. Tom Pynsent was delighted.

"Well done, Bill, well done, my sharp lad! Come, that's enough at a time! Live to fight another day, Bill!"

"Come to your granny, my sharpshooter," cried Mrs. Pynsent; "I have something in my pocket for stout-hearted men!"

Billy toddled to his grandmother, who drew a box of sugarplums from her capacious pocket, and rewarded his prowess by a shower of sweets. Tom and Moll were likewise engaged in a controversy, which threatened to end in an engagement. They were quarrelling over Christobelle's parasol, Moll demanding it to walk with, and be a lady, like aunt Bell, while Tom insisted upon shouldering it like a bayonet, as the Count de Nolis had taught him. The dispute ran very high.

"Tom, dear, don't let the children fight,"

said Anna Maria, as she examined the make and material of her sister's silk pelisse, "they have been fighting all day."

"Aunt Bell, mayn't I have it?" screamed little Moll, as she struggled with her brother for the possession of the parasol.

"I will have it first!" roared Tom, dragging the handle from her grasp.

Mr. Boscawen extricated the parasol from their hands, and kept possession of it during their stay in the drawing-room, but no one else attempted to release Christobelle's property from the struggle. Tom Pynsent called their attention from their defeat.

"Now, Tom, catch papa if you can, and show your aunt whether your legs are as stout as your lungs. Moll! Bab! Bill! now for it!"

The drawing-room became a scene of dreadful confusion. Tom Pynsent, delighted to show off his children, and always the foremost to give them pleasure, threaded the mazes of the tables and chairs, while the little ones raced screaming and hallooing after him. Mr. Boscawen sought a retreat from their deafening shouts by quitting the room, and even Anna Maria half closed her eyes, as she assured her sister they made really more noise that day than ever, in compliment,

she supposed, to her arrival. Mrs. Pynsent sat with the box of sugarplums on her lap, enjoying the din of voices, and inciting them forward, by clapping her hands and exclaiming:—"Hurrah, my lads and lasses, catch him! Round the chair, Bill! — down you go — up again — well done, my hearty! Halloo there, Moll! Bab, you be hanged!" Mr. Pynsent looked overpowered, but he said nothing.

Such were the sports of Hatton. The commotion continued till both parties, the chaser and the chased, became wearied with their exertions, and then the children wished to go and ride their rocking-horses. Mrs. Pynsent loaded them with sweetmeats and good advice, as she dismissed each from her presence.

"I say, you young Tommy, don't suck your fingers, but look to that poor morsel of a Bill, and don't run over him. If he falls, pick him up, and wipe his nose, like a little gentleman. Here, my Moll in the wad, look at your torn frock, and don't thump Bab upon the back so hard. Never mind, Bab, here's six sugarplums for that thump, and you must give it Moll well, tomorrow. What, Bill, old boy! you must have sugarplums, too, must you? There then, and

toddle after them, my sharpshooter. Go all of you to old aunt Hancock."

When the children were gone, Christobelle had time to give her attention to Anna Maria. The elegance of Miss Wetheral had in a great degree lost its tone, but Mrs. Tom Pynsent was fashionably French still in her dress and appearance. Rouging very highly gave an unnatural brilliance to her eyes, and her figure had become enlarged, though not in the same proportion with Isabel: Christobelle thought her handsome and striking, but she was not the pale, still, and interestingly elegant woman, who had volunteered her affections to the stout, good-looking, red-faced Tom Pynsent. Many might have considered Anna Maria improved by the change which had gradually taken place in her appearance; but Christobelle had admired her so greatly in her more youthful days, that her eye could not reconcile itself to her present style. There was, she thought, something too garish in the deeply-rouged cheek and glittering eye of her sister.

Her affection for her husband was quite unchanged: she still spoke of him with powerful affection, and dilated upon his unvaried kindness and good temper with vivacity. During

Christobelle's long absence, Tom had never changed towards her in indulgence and interest. Mrs. Pynsent was all that could be desired in a mother-in-law, for her warm heart never fancied she could do enough for those she loved; and poor Mr. Pynsent was in nobody's way. Anna Maria doted upon her children, and she confessed herself to be "the happiest woman in the world, when the children did not fight, but they certainly did fight furiously, and Tom and his mother encouraged it."

Christobelle asked after the health of Félicé.

"Oh, Félicé is very well, but she cannot comprehend a word of English, stupid girl, and I am losing my French. Every body borrows Félicé, and she travels all round the county before any public meeting takes place. Félicé is always borrowed by Pen Spottiswoode before the races, and, when she appears, you would declare her clothes were cut out by the Lidham cook, instead of Félicé. Pen never dressed well, you know, Bell."

"Miss Bell," cried Mrs. Pynsent, from a distant corner of the drawing-room, "have you heard any tidings from Bedinfield? because there is a rod in pickle for somebody in that quarter. Your poor sister has made a sorry concern of

that grand match, which was to her so desirable. Not much better a business than Lady Kerrison's! Report is saying the deuce and all of poor Miss Julia and that colonel. That dowager never was liked by any one, for her acquaintance was always a blight upon the poor soul who made it."

Christobelle asked if her sister had been in Shropshire, since their removal into Scotland.

"No, my dear; Lady Ennismore has never suffered her son to bring your sister into Shropshire, since her return to England. She has her own reasons for it. I know what I could call her, only I have promised Sally Hancock never to use large words, now her own mouth is stopped, poor thing! If your sister elopes with that moustache fellow, it will be the fault of those who married her to such a poor creature as my lord."

"Have you heard any thing in *particular* about Julia, my dear Anna Maria?" asked Christobelle, in a low voice.

"Reports only," was her reply, "but they begin to assume a form. There are very strange reports about Colonel Neville, but we do not hear from Julia; she has never written to me since I went to the altar with her, and I was

tired with writing unanswered letters. Papa told us when he returned with you from Bedinfield, that it was vain to hope she would ever be withdrawn from the dowager; and if she did discover treachery, it would only make her wretched, without a hope of escape. Lord Ennismore is devoted to his mother, and Julia would suffer, he thought, by any complaints on her side. We hear Lord Ennismore is in a poor way, but we know nothing: Julia might as well be in another hemisphere, since we neither meet nor correspond. How miserably Clara and Julia have been in their choice, Bell! I cannot be too thankful I won my dear Tom at last."

"I say, Miss Bell," cried Mrs. Pynsent from her corner, where she sat knitting, "I say, Miss Bell, when does Sir Jacky return to us?" Anna Maria smiled at her sister's confusion. Christobelle hesitated for a moment to reply.

"Miss Bell, Sir Jacky is a great favourite of mine, and I want to hear a little about him. Come here, Miss Bell, come nearer to me, I want to ask a question."

Christobelle approached Mrs. Pynsent, amused at the idea of her intended jokes, which could not offend, since only Anna Maria was now present. The two gentlemen had sought for Mr.

Boscawen when the children dispersed. She, therefore, seated herself near her.

"What have you to say to me, Mrs. Pynsent, that is not kind and pleasant at all times?"

"I have this to say," she replied, with a seriousness foreign to her usual manner, "I have to say, that, much as I liked you as a girl, I love you far better than ever, *now*, because you had the sense to refuse a young coroneted rascal some time ago, and choose a man who will be a jewel to you. You showed sense and spirit in refusing to be manœuvred into wickedness, to lead the abominable life which two of your sisters have been doomed to suffer; and you showed a right woman's warm heart, in taking a man whom I like and respect next to my own Tom for comeliness and godliness. When a young woman marries such a tight lad as Jacky Spottiswoode, she knows she will be happy to the day of her death, and be respected among her friends. Now, Miss Bell, what do you say to that?"

Christobelle said nothing. Tears filled her eyes, and spoke volumes for her. She was affected with the idea that all her friends, except *one*, approved the connexion she was about to form. Mrs. Pynsent's remarks affected her still

more, because they were spoken with unusual quietness of manner and phrase, and her words ever came from the fountain of her heart in all truth and sincerity. She spoke, too, the sentiments of those around her; Christobelle judged so, by Mrs. Pynsent assuring her of the respect of her friends. It was a deep gratification to think her attachment was sanctioned by those she loved and honoured; and it was a grateful pride to feel assured the finger of scorn or ridicule had never pointed observations offensive to the high character of her beloved Spottiswoode. Was it to be wondered at that she sat silent by the side of Mrs. Pynsent, enjoying feelings too blessed for utterance? She saw her agitation, and forbore to notice it; but Mrs. Pynsent was not wanting in real delicacy to those who did not offend her notions of right; and to Christobelle she had ever shown peculiar kindness. She addressed her daughter.

"I say, Anna Maria, we'll have old Sally Hancock to spend the evening with us, to compliment Miss Bell. It's all over with Sal now, so she won't shock the company. You need not be afraid of Sally Hancock any more, for she can't speak, if she was dying for it. I can see her poor eyes glare up sometimes; you won't mind

Sally Hancock. She likes to watch the children, and when they don't pull her crutch from her, they are great friends. Moll and Bab often imitate her walk, but Sally Hancock only laughs at them."

"I wish the children would not fight so much," remarked Anna Maria.

"Fiddle diddle! my Tom fought Pen Spottiswoode like a dragon when he was their age, and he is all the better for it. I don't like to keep down their spirits. How would our little Moll climb the sycamore, if she hadn't a fearless spirit? Well, look at Bobby, between those two great monsters upon the lawn! Boscawen looks such a long animal, compared with Bobby. Don't you think Bobby is worn into half a goose, Miss Bell? He looks trussed for the spit."

"I think Mr. Pynsent looking very well—better than your letters insinuated, Mrs. Pynsent."

"Poor Bobby! no, he's nothing better than half a goose now; but Sally Hancock and myself remember him a smart lad. There goes the half-hour bell!"

"Come, then, Bell, we will depart, for my toilette is a long affair," said her sister, rising.

"I say," called Mrs. Pynsent, as they left the

room, "I say, Anna Maria, don't let Bell into the secrets of the prison-house."

"Oh! Bell knows all about *that!*" replied the laughing Anna Maria. "Tom is the only person who does not know my secret. Every body knows I only rouge to please Tom."

CHAPTER XXIX.

Hatton was by no means so agreeable a *séjour* to Christobelle as in former days. The Pynsents were never happy without the four unruly children constantly in their sight; and their amusements were the chief subjects under consideration. The children scrambled over the table to snatch at the dessert; they were admitted in the drawing-room at all hours, and in every phase of dirt and fighting; they were to drag heavy weights round the room at pleasure, and every one made themselves a party in their quarrels.

Mrs. Pynsent generally advocated the part of the baby, whom she designated "that proper divil of a Bill," with a hearty vehemence which increased the uproar and confusion; while her son, with stentorian voice, argued in favour of the girls. Anna Maria rarely interfered in the

alarum which occurred. She sat smiling at the fray, only her distress was occasionally awakened by the length and frequency of the battles, and her taste was offended at intervals, by the disagreeable abbreviation of their names. She "wished her Mary could be called by her right name, and not Moll. She would give any thing they would call the baby Willy, instead of that horrid 'Bill;' and as to Bab, it was a shocking word; but Bab she would be called for ever. Barbara was too long a word for her mother and Tom to pronounce. Sometimes she fancied their noise must be disagreeable to their guests, but Tom loved to have the little things round him."

The Pynsents were, therefore, the happiest people possible in themselves; but it was extremely disagreeable. Every body must think Hatton a very disagreeable place to stay at now; and Christobelle was glad to escape with Mr. Boscawen the following day to Lidham. She had little difficulty in privately persuading him to curtail their intended stay at Hatton, and proceed to the Spottiswoodes. He, as well as Christobelle, felt the utter hopelessness of procuring a peaceful moment, where every thought and feeling was absorbed in four remarkably noisy children. How very different to the Hatton of other days,

when she enjoyed the society of her sister undisturbed, and spent there such happy hours of her life! It was there, too, she met first the man whom she hoped to make happy for long years of futurity.

Christobelle thought they should never be allowed to enter the carriage when it drew up to the door. The children were delighted to get in and out, and Tom particularly amused himself with putting up the steps and throwing them down again with as much noise as the leather would allow. Tom Pynsent detained Christobelle in the hall, to enable her to enjoy a scene which he considered most delectable; and Mrs. Pynsent uttered exclamations of delight, as she watched the baby trying with all its might to imitate his companions.

"I say, Tom, do look at that divil of a Bill, trying to clamber into the carriage; did you ever see such a young dog? Moll, put Bill into the carriage. Let my sharpshooter take his turn. Moll, you'll break his leg!"

The "sharpshooter" was handed into the carriage by the butler, for "Moll" could not lift the scrambling child, and they all began jumping upon the seat till a battle commenced, through the instrumentality of Bab, who had pulled Tom's

hair rather too roughly. The screams of Tom were echoed by the baby; and Bab cried violently at her own ferocity. Tom Pynsent and their grandmother both spoke at once, in their loudest key.

"Halloo there, you young ones. Bill, what are you at, all of you? Hand out that young dog," cried Mrs. Pynsent.

"What the devil are you all roaring at? Moll, what's the matter?" called out Tom Pynsent.

"Pa, Bab pulled Tom's hair!" screamed Miss Mary, alias Moll. Mrs. Pynsent's words now became confounded with those of her son.

"What the devil!—don't fight there, you rascals!—Hand out Bill, James; they'll kill that poor Bill.—Here, Tom, never mind your hair: bring some cakes here, Dick, to stop this row.—Hand out that Bill thing, Thomas, he's on his head.—They're murdering Bill!"

"I declare my children will fight themselves to death," said Anna Maria, who took no part in the affair, "I am sure they will kill each other. Tom, dear, don't let the children fight so."

Mr. Boscawen took advantage of the moment when the carriage was emptied of its noisy contents, and hurried Christobelle into it. She

was too willing to quit the uproar of Hatton not to rejoice at his polite movement, and both were glad to remain silent for some time after they had quitted its grounds.

"I fancied," said Mr. Boscawen, after a long pause, "that Isabel spoiled her children, till I have now compared them with their cousins. I shall remain satisfied in future that they are not more vivacious than healthy children should be."

"It is altogether a different form of government at Brierly. You are monarch, though an indulgent one; but it is a frightful democracy at Hatton."

"I shall keep my young ones out of the infection," he observed; "for though Mary and Barbara may have hearts as kindly affectioned as their grandmother, those manners are deplorable. I should be sorry to see my little Bell become coarse and loud in her way of speaking."

"What could be the cause of the Miss Wycherlys imbibing such manners, in the first instance?" asked Christobelle.

"Old Wycherly was a broker," replied Boscawen; "and he retired to Lidham with an immense fortune, and a young wife whose connections were far superior to his own. Mrs. Wy-

cherly did not live many years, and the daughters were allowed to educate themselves, and to act, in every respect, as seemed good in their own eyes. They were always the subject of conversation; and, though they never were suspected of any thing more reprehensible than extreme wildness, their conduct subjected them to many extraordinary scenes, and much objectionable remark. Captain Hancock drank, I believe, to drown care, and Mrs. Hancock was infinitely the worst of the two. How the young ladies learned their swearing propensities, I cannot tell; but I have heard that their brother Wycherly led them into very exceptionable society in his youthful days. They were an extraordinary trio. No one, however, spoke ill of them."

"They had great good nature, I suppose."

"They had great wealth, Bell, or they never could have held any position in society. Four hundred thousand pounds drew the first gentlemen in the county to Lidham."

Christobelle chatted till the Lidham woods rose in sight, and then she became silent. Every thing connected with the name of Spottiswoode held a powerful interest in her heart, and concentrated her thoughts upon himself. She had heard from him once since her arrival at Brierly,

and then he spoke so cheerlessly of her mother's spirits, that he lingered to assist and console her father. He knew, he said, that he was giving her pleasure by attending upon her father, and he hoped so much from his assiduities! Dear Spottiswoode, how much more sanguinely than herself did he expect a change in her mother's sentiments!

As the carriage drove through the lodges, a gentleman on horseback galloped towards them. "Here comes Charles full of news," said Boscawen; "and he is riding fast, I suppose, to carry it fresh into Shrewsbury. A little news is a passport among one's neighbours."

Christobelle bent forward to observe Charles Spottiswoode; but no, it was *not* Charles Spottiswoode. Her heart beat thickly, and her eyes strained to gaze. She knew the horseman from afar: she knew the air, the figure, and the style of riding, well. Was her lover winging his way to her? — was he thinking of Brierly, and one there who loved him better than herself? Christobelle caught her brother's hand. "Boscawen, it is not him, it is *John* Spottiswoode! what brings him so soon from Fairlee?"

"God bless me!" cried Boscawen, "it is indeed our friend from the north, and I must stop

him, or he will never condescend to look at us." He put his head out of the carriage-window, and waved his hand: Sir John Spottiswoode heeded not the movement. He was riding rapidly by, and would have passed with a slight inclination of the head, had not Christobelle caught his eye. His handsome face glowed with surprise and delight, while her own feelings, so very suddenly called into action, completely took away her powers of speech. She could only hold out her hand, as he checked his horse, and wheeled round to the window, but it was pressed *so* fondly—and he looked *so* bright and happy!

"Why, Spottiswoode, what fair lady are you scampering after, that you nearly passed by *us?*" exclaimed Boscawen, shaking him by the hand.

"Never mind, I am going to turn back with you. Indeed, I was galloping to Shrewsbury, to get upon the coach for Brierly. I only arrived this morning."

"My *mother*, Spottiswoode," uttered Christobelle, in alarm—"how is my mother?"

"On her road to Wetheral, by short stages; I am but their *avant courier*, Chrystal. I have brought a letter for you. You will now, perhaps, offer me a seat in your carriage to Brierly,

when you return. My brother said nothing about your visit—do they expect you?"

"No, I am making a tour with my young sister—but let us reach Lidham before we enter into particulars."

The carriage moved on, and Spottiswoode rode by its side. How unexpected was this meeting, and how busy were Christobelle's thoughts, conjecturing upon the motive of her mother's early journey! If it had but a happy reference towards herself, how would her cup of joy be filled! but, no, her mother never forgave an offence like hers!

Christobelle was prepared to meet astonishment at Lidham, as she had found it every where else, since her return into Shropshire, and she was not deceived. Mrs. Charles Spottiswoode held her from her at arm's length, as she examined her person and growth.

"My dear little Bell, is this really and truly yourself? I have heard of you from persons whom I did not consider altogether unprejudiced in their accounts; but, indeed, I now see it with my own eyes! John, you have not said half enough of this creature. I recognise her eyes —those large eyes — but these ringlets — that

figure—no, John, upon my honour, you did not do her justice!"

Spottiswoode stood by Christobelle, and his eyes flashed a proud satisfaction at the remarks of his sister-in-law.

"But, Charles, Charles," she continued, "tell me if *you* could recognise Bell Wetheral in this grand creature! tell me if it is not a vision, for I cannot think I really see the prim little Bell, always poring over books, and diving out of her father's study with a little shock head, like my terrier Tarter!"

"Yes, I recognise Miss Wetheral," answered Mr. Spottiswoode, "for I see the same expression of good-humour, and the same fine outline, which gave such promise of what we behold. Miss Wetheral, you are most welcome to Lidham."

"By the Lord Harry!" cried Mr. Wycherly, emerging from his own room in spectacles, "here's a *posse comitatus!* Well, I'm come to welcome the new filly myself. How d'ye do, Miss Wetheral?—how d'ye do, ma'am? God help us, how the young people grow! They run us down, Mr. Boscawen! You are come to stay a week—a month with us, I hope? Come in, come in, all of you!" They entered the sitting-room, and the conversation was general for a short time,

till Mrs. Spottiswoode suddenly turned to Christobelle.

"My dear Bell, I know what your anxiety must be, to hear of those whom John has left behind. I see, by the expression of those large eyes, that you are longing to hear news of Fairlee. Come with me, and I give John alone leave to follow us. We will adjourn into the library. I can quite understand your feelings. John, you may follow us with your letters."

Mrs. Spottiswoode led Christobelle into the library, and there she again embraced her. The first reception, she said, belonged to Miss Wetheral, but now she embraced her future relation —the bride of her excellent John—the brother beloved by all! She was embracing now the future Lady Spottiswoode. Christobelle returned her embrace with fervent pleasure. She said her heart rejoiced in the congratulations of her friends, and in the language of praise which always accompanied the mention of Spottiswoode's name. She only hoped—and she expressed the hope with tears—that her mother would in time see Spottiswoode with the eyes of all who knew his great worth; that she would in time receive him as a dear son, and remove the only impediment to her happiness, by extending the hand of friendship towards him, and her par-

don towards herself. Mrs. Spottiswoode hoped all things.

"My dear Chrystal — which, by the by, is a prettier designation than Bell—there is bitter in every cup. Rest happy in the knowledge that Lady Wetheral's offended feelings proceed from disappointed views, and not from unworthiness in the object. It must always be painful to displease a parent, but it cannot, in this particular case, strike deep into your happiness. Your excellent father long wished for the match—he confessed it to John. Come in!" A gentle tap at the door was heard, and Spottiswoode entered.

"You allowed me to follow you—am I welcome now?"

"Ever welcome, wherever you appear, John; and most welcome to Chrystal and myself," said Mrs. Spottiswoode; "I will leave you while you read your letters together. I shall allow you a quarter of an hour, to acquaint yourself with their contents, Chrystal."

"One hour, Pen — only one little sixty-five minutes!" cried Spottiswoode, beseechingly.

"Indeed, you shall not monopolize my guest an hour, John. Do as you please at Brierly—but I will only relinquish Chrystal a quarter of an hour from this moment."

"Chrystal!" said Spottiswoode, as the door closed upon his sister—"Chrystal!"

Christobelle beheld her lover's arms extended. Away with every feeling but unfeigned joy to behold him again. She flew towards him, to be clasped to his dear, warm heart! "And now," she said, when their spirits had become somewhat tranquil, "tell me of my father, and tell me of my mother. Are they on the road?"

She listened with trembling eagerness to his reply. Spottiswoode had not seen Lady Wetheral since Christobelle quitted Fairlee. She could not be persuaded to leave her room, or resume the direction of the establishment. Sir John Wetheral suffered greatly from her determined resolution to avoid the man on whom he had bestowed his daughter; and he felt deeply, also, the privation of domestic comfort. It was that privation which kept Spottiswoode at Fairlee—he was anxious to be useful to the father who mourned her daughter's absence, and felt alone, in his own house.

Spottiswoode knew Christobelle would wish him to stay and solace her father—and he did stay; but his thoughts were chained to Brierly, while he lingered at Lochleven. He had never trusted himself to visit places where they had

roamed together. He had not once dared to seat himself on the rocky bench, or walk the terrace by moonlight. He had sat constantly reading in the window which witnessed their first confession of attachment, and he numbered the days which lagged heavily between him and his rest. He had been three weeks absent from all he loved.

How Christobelle dwelt upon the words which fell from Spottiswoode's lips! She could not sorrow for her mother's harshness while he was near her. She only felt the calm of his presence, and the absence of every regret. But she should weep when she was alone again! She should suffer when she had time to reflect upon every thing—but not at *that* moment, for the arm of Spottiswoode encircled her, and she was too happy to reflect.

Christobelle received no letter from Lady Wetheral, but her father wrote to her of all he suffered; and he said, his happiest moments were passed in contemplating her prospects. His Chrystal was given to a man who would value the blessing conferred upon him. She would be the wife of a good man—a wife as happy as Isabel, or as Anna Maria proved to be—a wife whose hopes were anchored upon high principle

and religious feeling, and who, therefore, would not be called upon to endure the undying torments of self-reproach.

He could not allow himself to think upon Clara—but she had been removed early from her strife. What Julia's destiny would be, he could not venture to assert. She was a banished child to him. They were to begin their journey the day after Spottiswoode quitted Fairlee, but the passage would be very slowly made, as her mother could not endure travelling long—her nerves were worse than ever. Her father urged her to be at Wetheral to receive them. If her other parent would not see her, Wetheral was large enough to contain them apart, but *he* could not live without her, and she must not disappoint him of her presence. Her father concluded his epistle with a thousand parental blessings and cares for her future comforts.

Spottiswoode watched Christobelle as she read. "Is it a letter of comfort, my Chrystal?" he asked, as she finished its perusal. "Yes, I think so, by those large eyes, as Pen calls them. It *is* a letter of comfort, is it not, dearest Chrystal?"

Christobelle placed it silently into his hands, and she now watched Spottiswoode as he read. She saw the deepened red upon his cheek, as he

lingered over her father's commendation, and his eye met her own.

"Every word of it is true, Spottiswoode," she observed.

"You are a partial, dear creature, Chrystal; but I will try to deserve his opinion so kindly expressed."

Mrs. Spottiswoode entered. "Three minutes past the quarter, John, and every one is impatient to see Chrystal again. Papa says she is as beautiful as his celebrated colt, which is the height of his commendation. I am jealous, too, myself of your society. You must return with me, good people." She led them forth.

Christobelle conferred with Boscawen upon the contents of her father's letter. Since he wished her to be at Wetheral when he arrived, she thought she had better not return to Brierly. They might travel more rapidly than was anticipated. Lady Wetheral might feel more equal to the journey than she imagined, and Christobelle might be at Brierly the moment they reached Wetheral. She felt she would prefer returning to Wetheral from Lidham; and Isabel would understand the circumstances, which left her no power to act otherwise. She would return to Brierly at a future time.

"Do as you please, my dear Chrystal: I think you are right in your decision. Your trunks shall be forwarded to Wetheral, and I will see you safely there to-morrow."

"Oh, nonsense, nonsense!" said Mrs. Spottiswoode. "Mr. Boscawen, you are an excellent guardian, but I cannot think your scheme a good one. Leave Chrystal with us: we are only three miles from Wetheral, and I will drive her over every day, to make preparations. If Sir John Wetheral should arrive unexpectedly, she will be there in twenty minutes — Chrystal shall not remain alone in that enormous place!"

Much consultation took place, and it was decided, at last, that Christobelle should accept Mrs. Spottiswoode's invitation, and remain at Lidham: Mr. Boscawen consequently changed his own plans, and determined to return immediately to Brierly. The horses were yet at Lidham, and they should take him back to Shrewsbury.

"Now what extreme folly, my dear Mr. Boscawen! You intended to stay here with Chrystal: why not allow us still the pleasure of your company?" Mrs. Spottiswoode would not hear of his departure. "Charles, persuade Mr. Boscawen to remain at Lidham!"

But Mr. Boscawen was resolved to return to Isabel: "he was in attendance upon Christobelle when he left his home; and now that charge was removed, he must return to Brierly and Isabel. He should acquaint her with Christobelle's movements, and he felt obliged by their wish to detain him, but he never left Isabel unless a momentous care devolved upon him, such as watching over the personal safety of his attractive sister Bell, or a child's tooth to be extracted. He should return *now* in time for Isabel's tea."

Excellent Boscawen! How fortunate was Isabel in securing a man so devoted to her comforts, and so loth to be absent from her. Her father was indeed right when he said Boscawen's age was the only objection he could urge against him.

And Christobelle was left at Lidham with the Spottiswoodes — the Miss Wycherly of other days, when Julia was her bosom-friend, and the Charles Spottiswoode with whom she suffered so long and despairingly, till Julia's bold confession ended the painful suspense on both sides! She was also wedded in heart to the elder brother, and their renewed acquaintance sprung

at once into friendship at the very moment of its renewal.

But where was Julia, who used to gladden her friends' heart so often? Where was the confidante of Penelope Wycherly, who used to fly to Lidham, to console and assist her friend in adversity, caused by her own transgressions? Where was that sprightly, affectionate creature? Alas! she was lost to her friends, and her voice had ceased to be heard among them! More than five years had elapsed since Julia's marriage, and from that hour she had never seen Lidham, or its inmates; she had not even noticed the nuptials of its mistress. What a change must have come over Julia!

It was a day of exquisite enjoyment at Lidham. Mrs. Spottiswoode loved to look at Christobelle, for she said she was strangely like Julia, and her heart bounded towards her as to an old and dear friend. Spottiswoode was also at her side, and there were no noisy children to break the tranquillity of her enjoyment by their unwelcome mirth. How could she be otherwise than most happy? What evil could reach her, while those she loved were near, and she could listen to the voice of her beloved one? None!

Mrs. Spottiswoode engaged the following

morning to drive Christobelle to Wetheral, and the ladies agreed to remain quietly in the house with their work, till the hour arrived for their airing. It was then that Mrs. Spottiswoode opened her heart, and told Christobelle all her fears respecting Julia's happiness. She heard only reports like the rest of the world; but they were reports which filled her with uneasiness and apprehension. She felt assured her friend had been sacrificed, and she was equally certain the Dowager-countess had been the mental vampire which clung to Julia, and destroyed her peace, by interfering with and withholding her correspondence. Sir John Wetheral had suspected as much at Bedinfield himself—she knew it was not Julia's nature to forget her friends—she would never credit the assertion, let who would insinuate it.

Reports breathed suspicion on her fame, with regard to Colonel Neville; but she would stake her existence that, however Julia's taste must have turned disgusted from her wretched lord, she was pure as unsunned snow. Any one who dared to question her friend's purity of mind before her, would rouse the blood of all the Wycherlys in her veins. Charles did not like the subject ever brought forward in her presence,

because she felt keenly every remark which touched upon her friend's miserable fate; but now the gentlemen were out of the way, she could unfold her fears to Christobelle.

"If ever there was a wretch in the form of mortal, Chrystal," she continued, "it is that wicked dowager; and we shall live to see it confimed in the case of my poor Julia, the friend of my youth, whom I loved so dearly. I told Charles she was going to woe, when she was led like a lamb to the slaughter! Oh, Julia should *not* have married Lord Ennismore, Chrystal!"

Mrs. Spottiswoode became affected as she dwelt upon the scenes of the past; and she detailed to Christobelle many incidents which had escaped her young observation. It was delightful to Christobelle to hear her talk of Julia, and her eyes often bore testimony to the sympathy she felt in the narration of their long friendship, and the events of their earliest days. The hall-door bell pealed its sounds as they wept and talked. Mrs. Spottiswoode was surprised and annoyed; she breathed hastily upon her hands, and applied them to her eyes.

"How very disagreeably early some people are calling; and our eyes, Chrystal, are quite unfit to be seen! I must draw down the blinds. I

really cannot receive any one with such a pair of eyes and such a heavy heart, comfortably."

The door was thrown open, but no name was announced. A female figure, however, appeared, and approached slowly and unsteadily towards Mrs. Spottiswoode. She spoke in tones which startled her ear and heart.

"I am come to try my friend's truth; for she told me that in evil report, or in good report, in weal or woe, *here* I should find rest!"

Mrs. Spottiswoode stood motionless.

"Julia!" she faintly uttered—"is this Julia's voice!"

"It is Julia, Penelope! I am come to seek my promised home, for elsewhere there is none!"

"Welcome, a thousand welcomes!" cried Mrs. Spottiswoode, springing towards Lady Ennismore, and clasping her to her heart with a straining pressure — "oh! welcome, whatever event may have brought my lost Julia home!"

"Home!" replied Lady Ennismore—"home! Have I been obliged to return from whence I came, to find a home!" Lady Ennismore shuddered as she spoke, and fell senseless in the still close embrace of her friend.

"Chrystal!" cried Mrs. Spottiswoode, "bolt the door: let no one enter this room!"

Miss Wetheral obeyed in silence, and she then assisted Mrs. Spottiswoode in conveying her sister to the sofa, where she remained extended till her consciousness gradually returned. Mrs. Spottiswoode trembled, but her powers of thought were clear and undisturbed. She spoke low, as Lady Ennismore lay in blessed forgetfulness of present sufferings.

"Chrystal, we will carry Julia into your room when she recovers, and here my angel friend will be tranquil. I will trust — I *know* she is blameless! but a thousand errors would not change my love, or the devotion with which I will watch over her for ever. If all the world deserted her, she would be *my* own dear friend; but for her fame's sake, I hope — no, it is *not* so —it is *not* so!"

Christobelle gazed in astonishment at her sister's extended form. She mechanically obeyed Mrs. Spottiswoode's directions, but her mind was a chaos. She heard her remarks, though she did not reply to them; she could not withdraw her eyes from the object which absorbed all her wonder.

"Chrystal," continued Mrs. Spottiswoode, as she chafed Julia's temples with eau de Cologne, "there has been dreadful work to bring my

blessed friend to this! Her spirit has been dealt with beyond her powers of endurance, to urge this step; but I, Penelope, am with her, and she is again at Lidham. I bless the events which have brought her from banishment, and given her again to her friends!"

A slight pressure from the hand which was clasped by Mrs. Spottiswoode, attested returning animation in Lady Ennismore, and proved that she heard and understood her friends' words. Mrs. Spottiswoode proceeded with deep feeling.

"Julia, you hear me—you hear your friend declare, that she cannot mourn the cause which has given her back the companion of her early days. We were ever together, Julia, and together we enjoyed our first step upon the gay stage of our pleasures. We will also walk together through the waters of adversity, and our sorrows shall be, as our joys have been, borne in fellowship. I am Penelope Wycherly in *heart*, and you are Julia Wetheral. We will part no more, my own dear, ill-used friend!"

Lady Ennismore raised her head from its pillow with effort.

"I have been hardly dealt with, I have been cruelly treated, Penelope! I must have been

very treacherously used, since I believed in the desertion of all my friends!"

"I see it all; I have long seen and feared all this, Julia! I know the snares which have been set to wreck your happiness, and throw you from your husband's heart! I know the influence which was feared and counteracted by that vile woman, with all the energy of vileness!"

A fit of trembling attacked Lady Ennismore, and cold perspiration bedewed her face and hands.

"If *you* have seen it, or can understand it, Penelope," she exclaimed, "how must *I* have felt it!" Lady Ennismore sunk back with the effort of speaking.

"Chrystal," said Mrs. Spottiswoode, "let us support Lady Ennismore to your room at once. There alone will be security and quiet. The gentlemen may be returning."

"What gentlemen?" exclaimed Lady Ennismore, hastily. "Don't allow Neville to come near me. I will never see him again."

"No one is coming, my own Julia, but Charles Spottiswoode. You remember Charles Spottiswoode — your friend and mine, and now my husband?"

"Yes, I remember him, but I never heard of

your nuptials; every body was so silent, every thing was kept from me!"

"Did Colonel Neville never inform you of Shropshire events, through the medium of the papers, dearest?"

The name of Neville pronounced by other lips produced extreme terror. Lady Ennismore started up, and seized Mrs. Spottiswoode's hands.

"Don't believe a word of it, Penelope!—don't credit that horrible assertion! it is untrue! As I am looking for the peace which can only reach me beyond the grave, I never lost my own respect, or forgot I was a wife!"

"I knew it—I knew it!—I never would believe a word of their vile reports!" exclaimed Mrs. Spottiswoode, bursting into tears: "but oh, Julia, your words are balm to my heart!"

"I have flown from treachery, Penelope; and if you receive me, so will my father. Oh, my father!—my poor father!—you told me your heart was not in my marriage! I heeded you not! I clung to my mother's prophecies that I should be great and happy!"

Lady Ennismore's emotion became alarming; and it was with some difficulty she was conveyed into her sister's apartment. She leaned

upon her friend, and Christobelle assisted in supporting her trembling form. Christobelle marked her sister's emotion, and heard her deep suppressed sobs. The last time she beheld Julia Wetheral she was led in the pomp and circumstance of bridal glory, anticipating the excellent things which wealth and station are supposed to command.

Lady Ennismore was laid upon the bed, and it was hoped repose would give comparative tranquillity, but Julia's disease was of the heart: she could not rest.

"Penelope," she said, as her pale cheek grew hectic in its deep glow, "I have flown *from* Neville!—I have not flown *with* him! The world may say my flight was wrong, but they cannot say it was infamous!"

"Heed them not who dare say so, Julia. We are together, and my love shall be your shield from the world's remarks—but it will soon distinguish your innocence—it will not lay the burthen on the innocent long. You will be justified in your action, my own dear friend!"

"I hope so—I hope so! I fled from my own heart, too, Penelope; I might have fallen like others, but I fled from my own heart, and from persecution. Oh! don't let any one come near

me but yourself, Penelope. That young lady is very kind. I told Neville to follow me no more. Do not persecute me, Neville—let me alone to grieve silently. I am unhappy, but I am yet a guiltless wife. I will go to Penelope....."

Lady Ennismore's spirit wandered: fever was upon her cheek, and she ceased to remember her own friend.

"I will go to Penelope—she always loved me, and she will save her poor friend. I wish I could get to Lidham! A chaise, Conynham—a chaise to the lake-house! If I could only get in—but my foot will not move. Lift me in, Conynham, if you would save me from the Countess!"

A slight shriek broke from Julia's lips, as if in her vision she had encountered her mother-in-law. Mrs. Spottiswoode sent instantly for advice, and she summoned her husband, to consult with him upon the extraordinary arrival of Lady Ennismore. While the short interview took place in her dressing-room, Christobelle sat by the bed-side of the invalid, who had relapsed into total forgetfulness of her situation; and she could gather from her wanderings the nature of her sufferings, and the reason of her flight from Bedinfield. It broke Christobelle's heart, to hear her mournful voice in its ravings.

"Let me attend my lord, I beseech you. If he is ill, who dare close the doors of his apartments upon his wife? It is my duty to wait upon my lord—no, I will not be left whole hours and days with Neville. I know his kindness and his love for me. Where is my father? Will any one seek my father?—no, Neville, never—I am a wife—a guiltless wife—do not persecute me. I will go to Penelope, for she never ceased to love me — they are dead, I think — all that belong to me are dead!"

Low moanings succeeded, till again Julia burst forth in complaint, as her ideas dwelt upon the painful scenes of Bedinfield. All her anxiety manifested itself in reproaches to Colonel Neville, and in fancied inability to enter her lord's chamber. Not one self-reproach mingled among her moving cries—all was purity of thought, as Mrs. Spottiswoode had unceasingly believed and maintained, in her remarks upon Julia's conduct.

Charles Spottiswoode heard her complaints, as she rambled in alarm lest the Countess should intercept her flight to Penelope, and he could not endure the sound of her voice in sorrow: he quitted the dressing-room in distress almost as poignant as that which agonized the heart of his lady, who sat in silence and in tears, hoping fer-

vently that the step of the physician would soon be heard. It was vain to soothe her complaints; she did not hear the voice of consolation. She was conversing with herself upon circumstances which absorbed her attention, and her mind was evidently in the home she had quitted so eagerly. He came at last. The voice of Dr. Darwin sounded in the gallery, and there was hope and comfort in the knowledge that all would be done which science and kindness could effect. This was the second member of the Wetheral family whom he had attended under circumstances peculiarly painful.

Dr. Darwin at once discovered the secret of Lady Ennismore's state, and applied himself to give temporary tranquillity to her disordered mind. It could be, he said, but temporary rest: he could not make her forget the sorrow which raged within, or mitigate her waking grief—*that* must be effected by other hands—but anodynes would lull its fury, and bestow rest upon the frame. Since Lady Ennismore spoke fondly of her father and Mrs. Spottiswoode, they must be near her; and, if possible, they should be present whenever she woke from her unnatural rest. The sight of esteemed objects was grateful, and would prevent the immediate recurrence of pain-

ful thoughts. It was very fortunate Sir John Wetheral was expected shortly, and he would advise the constant attendance at present of Mrs. Spottiswoode alone.

Mrs. Spottiswoode remarked that Lady Ennismore had not recognised Christobelle during the whole scene. She thought it a remarkable instance of forgetfulness in a person so nearly connected. Dr. Darwin considered it only a proof of the depth of her suffering, which fed exclusively upon itself. Till the recognition took place, he prohibited Christobelle's return into her room, but the sooner it was named to her ladyship the better — it would rouse her attention from more afflicting thoughts.

Dr. Darwin remained at Lidham till the medicine took effect upon Julia's nerves, and she sank into sleep. Mrs. Spottiswoode and Christobelle then sat in the dressing-room, with its door half closed, and pondered over the event of the morning. It was too evident that the Dowager had thrown Colonel Neville constantly into the society of Julia, and that she had been debarred all communication with Lord Ennismore.

What could be the reason which prompted the Dowager to poison the fountain of their domes-

tic peace? It was that insatiable love of power, which thirsted for entire dominion over the imbecile mind of her son, and for which every tie, moral and religious, must be torn asunder. It was that devouring passion for domination, which swallowed up every kindly feeling, and bore down all impediments to its terrific strides. It had sacrificed the happiness of Julia, the best and gentlest of created beings—it had aimed at her reputation; and, to sever Julia's influence from her son at one fell swoop, the Countess had endeavoured to make her a prey to infamy. She had endeavoured to cause an eternal separation between two unoffending beings, that her reign at Bedinfield might be perpetual! She had succeeded only in driving Julia from her husband's house. Oh, Power! how gradually and wickedly do its votaries consume every right principle, to feed its fiercely-burning fires!

Christobelle saw Spottiswoode but once after her sister's mournful entrance into Lidham, and she was too much overpowered with regret to enjoy his society. She could not recall her thoughts from Julia, to concentrate them even upon him—but he was also in low spirits. His feeling heart sympathised in the general sorrow, and they mourned together over the fallen hopes

and the short career of Julia's brilliant prospects. Like a shooting star, she had fallen from the altitudes of a princely marriage, to the cold, dark nothingness of disappointed earthly pleasures. How Christobelle mourned over her brightly gay sister, whom she remembered so lovely and so loved! She did not remain long with Spottiswoode. She left him, to pass the evening and night in her dressing-room, to assist Mrs. Spottiswoode in her cares, and to think of Julia.

CHAPTER XXX.

Lady Ennismore's illness was long in its continuance and severe in its effects. Mrs. Spottiswoode watched over her with unceasing and affecting attention; and it was often painful to witness her agonized fears, lest her friend should sink beneath the combined attacks of mental and bodily suffering. It was sad to look upon a creature so changed as Julia, and hear her touching exclamations under the effects of almost constant delirium. It was heart-rending to hear her call upon Lady Ennismore with passionate entreaties, demanding admittance to her lord, and imploring her to save her from Neville—it was still more touching to hear her imprecate sorrow upon the head of those who could lure a desolate wife to her destruction.

The sight of Dr. Darwin terrified the invalid for many days. She addressed him as Colonel

Neville, and her wandering fancy conceived that Colonel Neville was seeking an interview. She waved him from the room with an impetuous movement, and implored him to leave an unhappy wife in peace. She said he knew she loved him —he knew she loved the friend who was kind to her when all others had deserted her, but she commanded him to fly from her!—she was the wife of Lord Ennismore, and no power on earth should induce her to listen to him. "If her father was alive to protect her," she said, "he would shelter her from woe and treachery—but all were gone who ever loved her, and she would go to her long lost friend Penelope."

It was evident Lady Ennismore had flown from Bedinfield to escape from her own heart, as she avowed to Mrs. Spottiswoode. It was evident, also, that the Dowager-countess had acted an unholy part by her daughter, in throwing her constantly into the society of Colonel Neville, and barring her entrance into the apartments of her sickly and weak-minded husband. Such cruelty towards an innocent and trusting creature affected the heart of Mrs. Spottiswoode almost to illness: her mind dwelt long and strongly upon the distress of heart, which must have been endured by her friend before she could

have fled from her husband's house; and Mr. Spottiswoode became alarmed lest his wife's health should fall a sacrifice to her devoted attachment to the friend of her early days.

In this time of severe trial to all parties, Sir John Spottiswoode acted with the kindest consideration; and he undertook to meet Sir John Wetheral upon his arrival, and break to him the mournful intelligence of Lady Ennismore's situation. Before his arrival, however, her ladyship had regained her consciousness of all that was passing round her, and the parched fever, which consumed her animal powers, yielded to the judicious treatment of her medical adviser. Julia again recognized her friend, and again received pleasure in feeling herself watched over and protected by those she loved. Her weakness was excessive, and her mind still dwelt upon the sorrow which oppressed her; but it was no longer accompanied by that fearful aberration of intellect, which wasted her strength, and tore the hearts of those who witnessed its effects. Mrs. Spottiswoode passed her waking hours at her friend's side, for it was a cordial to Julia's spirit to see her near, and to know Penelope was watching over her; but Christobelle was deputed

to guard her short and uneasy slumbers. It was a period of deep and trembling anxiety.

Sir John Wetheral's cares were crowding upon him. He had been destined for some years to witness the shattered nerves and depressed spirits of his lady, and he was now called upon to witness the sufferings of Julia, and to support her through the difficulties of her situation. It was a severe trial to his feelings; but he met the intelligence with fortitude. His unworldly actions caused no self-reproach, and he had never sacrificed his sense of right to the idols of a vain imagination, therefore his regrets, however bitter, were untinged by the gloomy reflection that his own hand had barbed the arrow which struck his heart.

Not so Lady Wetheral. The intelligence of Julia's flight to Lidham prostrated her to the earth, and bowed down all her hopes. She confined herself to her own room, and talked incessantly to Mrs. Bevan of the misery which overpowered her. "She had done such things for Clara and Julia! — she had formed, and prosecuted, and brought into effect, plans for their advancement, which should have raised them far above their companions; yet they were dashed to the ground, after such anxieties and fears!

The daughters whom she peculiarly considered under her own rule had proved themselves unequal to enjoy the exalted situations she had marked out for them; and Bell, a perfect child, fostered among the wild hills of Lochleven, had presumed to refuse a dukedom, in order to follow her mean affections, and content herself with a small estate in Worcestershire! What was Julia, now? A truant wife — a woman, so lost to propriety, that her future position in people's minds must be equivocal — a creature who would in future be gazed upon as a deserter from Bedinfield. Such was the fate of those who created scenes! — a world's wonder, and a thing of nought!" A period of silence would ensue, subsequent to each irritable complaint; and Lady Wetheral would sink into deep fits of despondency, followed by sudden reaction, which threatened to undermine her constitution.

When Julia became sufficiently calm to bear the sight of a third person without alarm, Christobelle was silently admitted to her presence, and was recognized immediately with a joy which gave unfeigned satisfaction to Mrs. Spottiswoode. It seemed as if Lady Ennismore's spirit was not dead to emotions which must eventually lure her thoughts from melancholy

images, and reconcile her to life. Lady Ennismore fixed her eyes upon her sister with a momentary expression of delight, which gradually changed into sadness, and the tears stole down her cheeks. She pressed her hand to her heart. "Chrystal," she said, "when I saw you last, I was not as I am now!"

Mrs. Spottiswoode embraced her, and bade her think of happier times. Julia looked at her with eyes swimming in tears.

"Penelope, it soothes me to talk of the past, for my sorrow has been confined too painfully to my own bosom. Let me tell Chrystal how useless were the aids of grandeur and gratified ambition to give comfort to a breaking heart. It may make her less careful of the follies of worldly gifts—less ambitious than I was. Yet, I loved him; I loved Ennismore, once; but what heart will love through coldness—through indifference, and separation? Who can love, when kindly affections are thrown aside, or made the sport of unfeeling ridicule? Chrystal, marry not, unless you are sure you are valued—unless you love a man for the goodness of his nature, and not for his earthly possessions."

Christobelle bent forward, and pressed her

lips upon Julia's hand, as it lay upon her own. She could not speak.

"If they tell you, Chrystal, that life has no blessings beyond high station and the luxuries of wealth, look at me, and believe them not. It is false to say so. My father told me it was false, and I did not heed him. I smiled at his anxiety, and thought him prejudiced. Where is my father?—Where is my dear father? Is he alive, Penelope? Oh, do not say that good father is gone, who mourned so, after my hapless choice was made—who looked so calm and so sad at Bedinfield!"

Christobelle assured her every member of the family still lived, and then she repeated to her the message which her father had charged her to deliver when Julia's returning reason could bear its import. It was a message of kindness: they were words of indulgent goodness, for none other ever passed *his* lips. "Tell my poor Julia," he said, "that her father's eyes long to behold her, and his arms are open to embrace her, when she can bear the meeting. There is a home at Wetheral, to shelter her; and his fond affections are anxious to make her forget she ever left its protection." Julia wept abundantly.

"Yes, we resist advice, and defy the truths

which tell us how weak and insufficient we are to reason upon things which concern our peace hereafter. I believed my mother-in-law was all truth—all sincerity. I felt for Lord Ennismore's ailments. I did not know how deeply those ailments affect the temper and weaken the mind. I was ambitious—I was resolved to soar: and see, Chrystal, how I have fallen! Thank Heaven, I am guiltless!—thank Heaven, I can return to my father's house, untainted by crime! I shall never more be happy, but I can demand respect, and bow submissively to a just punishment for my sordid views. I fancied I could command all, as the wife of Ennismore! but I came to Penelope's house—a poor, solitary, wretched wife—a fugitive from Bedinfield—flying, above all, from myself. Oh, my friend, my dear Penelope, save me from myself!"

"Fear not," replied Mrs. Spottiswoode, kneeling by her bed-side, and clasping Julia's hands in her own, "fear not, my companion and friend! I will be with you, and my counsel and affection shall support you. Think no more of the past, but hope every thing from the future: forget all that has occurred, and look around you, upon the friends of your youth, all prepared to welcome and cherish you, dearest Julia."

"I wish I *could* forget—I wish I could struggle, and burst the bonds which destroy my tranquillity, Penelope! I wish I could wipe away remembrances which will embitter my existence, and which have shortened the days of my youth, and multiplied my sorrows—how I wish I *could* forget!"

Mrs. Spottiswoode signed to Christobelle to withdraw, and she retired into the dressing-room. Penelope continued kneeling, and embracing the hands of her complaining friend.

"Julia, open your heart to your old favourite, and remember there was a time when we never concealed a thought from each other's knowledge."

Julia gasped and trembled.

"Julia, your friend has guessed the struggles you have endured, and your flight has increased her love and high respect, if it could allow an increase. It is not every ill-used wife—it is not every desolate heart—that could have flown from Neville." Julia's hands became cold as marble in Mrs. Spottiswoode's grasp, and she turned her face from her friend's gaze in terror.

"Julia," continued Mrs. Spottiswoode, "by every recollection of our childhood passed together—by the tenderness which ever existed

between us, and by our attachment, which has survived absence and silence, open your heart to your poor Penelope! It is only known to Chrystal and myself, that your temptations have been severe, and your virtue severer still. It is to our bosoms alone that your confessions have been made, Julia; and we love, with a deeper feeling of esteem, the virtues we could not emulate under the same trial. Do not speak in humility to us — do not fear to boast of the victory over your own heart!"

"Have I then been delirious, Penelope? Have I spoken of him in bitterness? Have I said any thing of Ennismore in anger? I have no anger towards him. He was but weak and devoted to his mother. My father cautioned me! I have no excuse, Penelope. How anxiously my father cautioned me, and how stupidly I rejected the caution!"

"You were young, Julia; you could not suspect an artful and cold-hearted woman!"

"So we say, when a parent's anxiety has been scoffed at, and we are crushed by a dreadful experience. I knew my father's indulgence — I knew his fears for my happiness — yet I turned to listen to the dictates of a wretched ambition. Oh, my mother, my mother, *you* sacrificed me!"

Julia sank upon the pillow from which she had risen with a strong effort, and continued, in faltering accents—"Penelope, did I mention another name? If I did, have mercy on me, and forbear to judge your friend! You do not know how I have striven to do right!"

"I do know it, my beloved, I do know it—" exclaimed Mrs. Spottiswoode, "and I guessed it, before your overcharged heart declared it in delirium. I, your friend, know it; and may those who have shadowed your days with evil, drink deep of the cup they prepared for you, Julia!"

"Oh, my mother, my mother!" cried Julia, "how could you guide me into misery! How could I think you were preparing sorrow for the child who loved and believed in your words!"

Mrs. Spottiswoode wept over the friend who lay prostrate, in body and mind, before her. Julia essayed to rise, but her exhaustion was too great; she could only press the hand of her faithful friend.

"Penelope, as you love me, never name even to myself the horrible secret of my soul. Let it be for ever forgotten between us, and strengthen me by your wise counsel and friendship, my own blessed companion of once happy days!"

"Rest, rest, Julia," said Mrs. Spottiswoode,

" and do not exert your failing strength. I understand you. We will in future only speak of calm days, and look forward to the sober pleasures of friendship. Among your friends, the friends of your youth, Julia, there will be peace."

Lady Ennismore shook her head, and the tears which trickled through her closed eyelids evinced her hopelessness of future tranquillity, but she remained silent. Mrs. Spottiswoode kissed her pale cheek.

" Exert yourself no more, dearest Julia. I know all that is passing in your heart, and its struggles for oblivion upon the past. Weep not, my ill-used friend—my heart shall comfort you, and my love shall heal the wounds of betrayed affection. You do not know the hearts which are rallying round you, and are only waiting your convalescence to declare themselves your sympathising and devoted friends. Be at rest, my dearest Julia—I fear for the consequences of this weakening conversation. Try to be composed and sleep, to quiet your poor friend's alarms."

But the conversation had not weakened Lady Ennismore. Her spirit was lightened by the knowledge that her secret was discovered, and that her friend still loved and honoured her with

unabated affection. It was a relief to her heart, to feel assured that her friend did not judge her severely; but that, with true friendship, she had poured balm upon her broken hopes, and sympathised in her sufferings. The load of care which pressed upon her mind and strength was cast upon the confiding friend of her youth, whose consolations soothed and tranquillized the sorrow which had consumed her. The husband, for whom she had quitted her home and friends, had caused many miseries; but the hand of friendship had supported her. What woe is not assuaged by that gentle and cheering consolation! — that gift accorded by Providence to soften the ills of a patient and submissive spirit!

Lady Ennismore wept silently for some time, but she did not weep with the bitterness which destroys rest. Doubtless, her tears fell with mingled feelings of joy and grief; doubtless, her heart was filled with grateful thanks, that her destiny was yet cheered by the consolations of tender and affectionate friends; doubtless, she wept to feel the tears of Penelope upon her cheek; that Penelope Wycherly, whom *she* had befriended in her hour of affliction, and who had shared with her the joys and fears of childhood. No wonder Lady Ennismore wept! though her

emotion ceased to be of that distressing nature which gave her friends so much pain to witness. It was weeping which relieved her heart, and produced favourable results; for she became gradually more tranquil, and her pale thin hand relaxing in its grasp, gave happy assurance to Mrs. Spottiswoode that her unhappy friend slumbered.

When Dr. Darwin called again at Lidham, Lady Ennismore still slept and lay composed. From that moment Julia's most distressing symptoms disappeared, but she suffered from a languor which was oppressive; a languor which pervaded mind and body to such a powerful degree, that she scarcely seemed to exist. It had one excellent result. Lady Ennismore ceased to suffer pain: it was a state apparently of perfect torpor, caused by intense distress, and its tranquillity must be to her enjoyment. She ceased to feel the extent of her misery.

Sir John Wetheral's visits to Lidham were of daily occurrence; he longed to clasp his poor fugitive to his heart; but Lady Ennismore's present situation required care, and all agitating interviews were prohibited. It was only when the torpor which had seized upon her became alarming by its continuance, that her father's

presence was advised, to try its effect upon her mind. If that interview did not awaken her powers, it was feared that nothing henceforth would rouse her from the stillness of death, till she forgot for ever the cares which had disturbed her short pilgrimage. Mrs. Spottiswoode urged the interview with anxious hope: she knew Julia's strong affections, and she felt firmly convinced that if any earthly object *could* rouse her, it would be the sight of her indulgent parent. Sir John Wetheral was accordingly summoned to appear unexpectedly before Lady Ennismore.

Julia was seated in her arm-chair, with her eyes fixed on the ground, when Christobelle entered her chamber in the evening; but, as usual, no sign of recognition took place. Miss Wetheral advanced towards her sister, and offered her arm. "Julia, let us take one turn round the room."

Lady Ennismore rose without speaking, and mechanically took the arm of Christobelle, but she did not raise her eyes. Miss Wetheral spoke again.

"Julia, look there!"

Lady Ennismore's eye slowly followed the direction of her sister's hand, which pointed towards the door. A scream burst from her lips,

as she beheld her father standing before her, and she flew into his arms. The sight of her father *did* rouse every recollection!

It is needless to dwell upon a scene so fraught with distress, or to describe the affecting interview. It would be painful to repeat Lady Ennismore's self-upbraidings, or to recount her father's soothing, and most parental words of comfort. He welcomed his Julia to his heart and home, with endearments which went deep into her grateful heart, and spoke peace to her broken spirit. It was a scene which Mrs. Spottiswoode and Christobelle never forgot. The tears they shed that evening bore testimony to their deep emotion.

When Sir John Wetheral and his daughter became more tranquil, Mrs. Spottiswoode would have terminated the interview, but Julia clung to her father's arm, and would not be separated from him. She would now, she said, open her heart to those so dear to her, that the work of a long absence might be confided to her parent's breast, and he should judge if her flight was rashly done. Mrs. Spottiswoode feared a relapse; but Julia would not hear of rest. "Let me speak now, Penelope, while my spirit is equal to the task. I may be ill, but my story

must be told; my father must be told; it will be a relief to know I need recur to the past no more. Let me speak *now*, Penelope."

Lady Ennismore recapitulated the events which had taken place since her father's visit to Bedinfield, and described her distress at finding he had departed without bidding her farewell. "Her mother-in-law had assured her so calmly that they *would* depart, and declined remaining another day to ascertain my lord's sudden attack, that she could not disbelieve the assertion, and the thought had given her severe pain. Profound silence, too, rested upon the transactions at Wetheral; not once had she received a letter from the home which professed to love her so tenderly. Not once did they acknowledge the numberless letters she had written, to entreat their consideration, and to implore them to answer her anxieties.

"After her father's departure from Bedinfield, as she thought, so coldly, so unkindly! her heart sank, and she became gloomy. Her lord received her as a stranger into his apartments during an illness of long continuance, while the Dowager remained stationed by his side, and her spirits could not endure the insulting banishment. She prayed to visit her home, to see

again her friend Miss Wycherly, to ask the reason of their silence, and demand their withdrawn affection. Her request was refused; but it was done so gently, so persuasively by her mother-in-law, that she could only weep while she acquiesced in their wishes to remain at Bedinfield.

"She began to fear Lord Ennismore did not love her; she began to suspect the politeness of his mother, whose manners had so long blinded her reason by their soft fascinations, but who had never, in a single instance, yielded to her wishes, or considered her rights as the real mistress of Bedinfield. That unchangingly-polite and flattering suavity had proved the firmest bar to her happiness; for it had left her without the power of complaint, while her heart was wrung with disappointed feelings. They had carried her almost broken-hearted to Florence."

Julia stopped; deep sighs burst from her bosom, and her head fell upon the shoulder of Mrs. Spottiswoode: her father became powerfully agitated; and Christobelle wept, without the power of controlling her tears. Lady Ennismore proceeded: —

"At Florence, a complete separation was si-

lently effected between Lord Ennismore and herself. His lordship confined himself entirely to his suite of apartments, and months often elapsed without an interview. Sometimes he accompanied them into public, but he would retire complaining from the exertion; and, though her own spirits demanded retirement, and even solitude, his lordship's commands were imperative upon her to appear with his mother at all the diversions where English families attended.

"She became at length a mere machine in the hands of the Dowager Countess. Without one friend to consult—absent from her nearest relations — unable to speak the language of the country—melancholy and careless of existence, she followed her mother-in-law into society without enjoyment, and retired from it without satisfaction. Her days became a blank, and she passed hours in silent weeping. At length an Englishman was introduced to her by the Dowager, who pitied her situation, and sought to amuse her heavy hours with news of her native land. He told her he had seen her sister Clara's marriage with Sir Foster Kerrison in the papers, and he had also seen the mention of her death. By this statement alone she knew that Clara was

no more. No letter from England announced it, no intimation from her family informed her of a sister's loss. She stood alone in the midst of her greatness. There were none to do her a kindness, or to offer her the consolation which was tendered to the humblest individual; none save that Englishman spoke to her of home; none save him came forth from the crowd, to speak of her country and her friends."

Julia's emotion increased, and she was nearly fainting, but she waved away all assistance. "Let me say what I have to communicate, my dear friends, and then I will be silent for ever on all that is past. Ah! my dear papa, you told me I was signing your misery, when I would not listen to your words. You told me you would rather follow my silent remains to the grave than see me the wife of Ennismore. Would to Heaven I *had* died! I should now be at rest."

Sir John Wetheral pressed his unhappy daughter to his bosom, and promised her rest under his own protection, and in the society of her friends. He wished her to defer her hapless story till time had somewhat recruited her strength; she was too weak to proceed in detailing miseries which must distress and exhaust

her powers. He entreated her, for his sake and her own, to recur no more to the past.

"Let me proceed," cried Lady Ennismore, "and judge me not hardly; judge me as Penelope judged me, kindly and graciously. I saw little of my husband — never, in private. Lady Ennismore could have effected any thing with her son, but she smiled at my repinings, and did not comfort me. She urged me to be gay, to shake off gloomy thoughts in wild amusement, and smile as others smiled. She sought Colonel Neville's society, and domesticated him in our palace. Wherever we went, he went also; and our home was the home of Neville."

Lady Ennismore sunk upon her knees before her father, and clasped his hands.

"As I live to breathe again my native air, and see the forms I love, I do believe she wished me to become the prey of evil passions, and fall a victim to her arts! I do believe she trusted I might be thrust for ever from her sight, and become the vile thing which would banish me eternally from a husband's presence. But I was enabled to withstand temptation. I prayed for strength to endure my destiny: and, when I dared not confide in my own efforts—when my heart was distracted, and my principles tottered,

then I knew I should find help at Lidham; for Penelope told me, in sickness or in sorrow, her home should be my home; and I have flown to her for safety."

Poor suffering Julia! How she trembled as her father raised her from her suppliant attitude, and called her his long-suffering, virtuous child! How gratefully she raised her eyes in silent prayer, when her father gloried in her principles, and said he loved her with a parent's deepest affection and pride, for the danger she had so religiously withstood. Yes, he blessed her for the firmness she had evinced, for the virtuous conduct which had not deserted her, and for the prayerful spirit which had led her to seek refuge in her God, instead of throwing herself into the arms of man. How did a father's blessing soothe the lacerated heart of the ill-used Julia!

From the hour of her confession, Lady Ennismore became more tranquil; and, though her constitution had received a powerful shock, it was hoped that time would bring back some portion of her once excellent health. Sir John Wetherel resolved to escort his daughters to their home as soon as Lady Ennismore could endure a removal; and, under the shelter of the parental roof, Julia would feel protected from the sorrows which had

darkened her married life. There she would be surrounded by her friends, and in its sanctuary she would feel no more the slights and insults which had pressed so heavily upon her affectionate heart. Mrs. Spottiswoode's near neighbourhood, and the friendship which had formed so conspicuous a part of her character, would throw a halo of consolation round the futurity of Julia; and when her father and her friends congregated round her, the breath of public opinion dared not whisper a thought injurious to her honour.

As Lady Ennismore slowly recovered the tone of her mind, her anxiety to hear of her family increased, and she was gradually informed of the changes which had taken place. Her ladyship had greatly wondered at Lady Wetheral's absence from her room, and she mourned sincerely to hear her mother's shattered health kept her closely confined at the castle. Clara's death was also detailed to her, and Lady Ennismore wept to hear that her sister had striven with evil days. She dwelt with constant and painful interest upon her short career.

It seemed that Clara and herself had been doomed to woe; and, though she smiled to think of Isabel's happiness, and loved to hear

of the contentment of Hatton, her ladyship's thoughts flew back to the direful scenes at Ripley, and sorrowed for the early death of Lady Kerrison. The remembrance of Clara drew Julia's contemplations from her own exclusive situation; and her tears would flow, to think of the sister whose temper could not brook the calls upon its patience. How different had been their fate, yet how alike in misery! She herself had borne daily and hourly provocations with unfailing submission, while Clara had spurned to tax her patience under trials, and died beneath her roused disgusts. Both had suffered — both had fallen; but Clara had burst the bonds which fettered her happiness, and she was resting in her early grave; while *she* was doomed to exist a widowed wife, and struggle under contumely!

When Lady Ennismore heard of Christobelle's engagement, she threw her arms around her youthful sister, and pressed her to her bosom, but she could not wish her joy.

"Chrystal," she said, with a look of sadness, "I can wish no one joy when they quit their home, for I was congratulated by all my friends, yet my portion was the cup of bitterness! I know Sir John Spottiswoode is worthy — at

least, it is reported so—but it is all uncertainty. When we quit our father's house, we know not what we do!"

"But I am not marrying for wealth or title, Julia; I am engaged to a man whose claims to my affection is his worth and excellence!"

Christobelle stood in distress at her inadvertent speech; for worlds she would not have bruised a broken reed; for worlds she would not wound the heart of her suffering sister. But Lady Ennismore was too high-minded to believe a blow was aimed at her own conduct.

"It is true, Chrystal, you say it truly. You *have* chosen a good and kind-hearted man, and your fate will not be like mine. I *can*, therefore, wish you joy. May you know only indulgence, and be as Isabel and Anna Maria are! I can wish you no higher felicity. But I have caused much trouble, for you have devoted your time to a poor creature who feels deeply the kindness of her friends, and who grieves to separate the happy. Where is Sir John Spottiswoode?"

Sir John Spottiswoode was at Alverton. He devoted the period of Christobelle's constant attendance upon Lady Ennismore, to the arrangement of his affairs in Worcestershire; and

when Julia's health released her sister from the cares of a sick room, Christobelle was to recal him. Miss Wetheral was easier also when she knew her lover was not near her. She could give undivided attention to her poor Julia, when she did not hear his step lingering in the gallery, or distinguish his voice under the windows, in conversation with his brother. On both sides it was a relief to part at once, till they could meet in peace. Their mutual comfort was destroyed by the knowledge that, though under the same roof, they could only meet in short and hurried interviews; and Christobelle rejoiced when her friend summoned resolution to visit Alverton.

Charles Spottiswoode also departed with his brother for a short season, and Lidham was the scene of perfect tranquillity during the distressing illness of Lady Ennismore. For the sake of Mr. Spottiswoode, who so generously relinquished his lady's society to her unfortunate friend, Sir John Wetheral hastened to withdraw with his daughters from Lidham, and Lady Ennismore sighed to see again the home of her early happiness, and to find repose in the once gay halls of Wetheral. Christobelle was, therefore, deputed to recal Sir John Spottiswoode,

and she was charged also to summon him to Wetheral Castle. Ere he could arrive, Julia would be re-established in her father's house, and the painful events which had taken place would, it was hoped, become softened by time, and the society of her early friends.

Lady Ennismore could not be expected to forget that "such things were;" but there was blessedness in feeling that her youthful error had not been accompanied by guilt, and that her sorrows could not be past hope, since she was free from self-reproach. She had endeavoured to perform the duties of a wife—she had keenly felt the influence which separated her from her husband's love — and every art had failed to render her faithless to her vows. In all these reflections there was consolation, and Julia's reward was in the love and esteem of her numerous and attached friends.

Sir John Wetheral wrote a calm and powerful appeal to the heart of the feeble-minded Lord Ennismore. He spoke of "his daughter's sufferings—her forbearance—and her return to the protection denied by her husband. He informed him of his resolution to protect that daughter whose fame must suffer by his barbarous treatment; and never more would he allow her to

return to the man who had so deeply injured her feelings, and her spotless reputation. He begged to say all future intercourse must end for ever between the families of Ennismore and Wetheral."

In due time a note was received, in the handwriting of the Dowager-countess, bearing these concise sentences :—

"The Dowager-countess of Ennismore regrets that the increased disorder of her son, Lord Ennismore, must compel her to become his amanuensis. The flight of Lady Ennismore is best known to herself; and the flight of Colonel Neville, at the same period, is also best understood by her ladyship. Lord Ennismore is content to remain deserted by his lady, and his mother will endeavour to supply her place by devoted attention to his offended and outraged feelings. Lady Ennismore is happy, if not respectable, in being upheld by her friends. The families of Bedinfield and Wetheral will meet no more."

This note was dated from Florence, and its contents were withheld from Julia. It would have caused the wounds of her heart to bleed afresh. It was better for her peace of mind, to remain in ignorance of Neville's flight, and to

be unconscious of the remark which pointed at her fame.

Julia declined seeing even Mrs. Pynsent, till her nerves had recovered their tone by long quiet, and till she had seen her mother. It would be a painful meeting with Anna Maria, because their last interview was at the altar, and that event had sealed their lives to prospects strangely opposed to each other. Anna Maria had given her vows to the man whom Julia rejected, and her lot was cast in a goodly heritage. She was a happy wife — a happy mother — and her children were growing up round her, under happy auspices: but Julia had returned home, to be protected from those who had vowed to love and honour her. It would be a very overpowering and painful meeting; it would force recollections upon her mind, fatal to her tranquillity; and the first sight of Anna Maria's happy face would, for some time, overthrow the placidity which she had acquired under the gentle soothings and support of Mrs. Spottiswoode. Julia contemplated the meeting with alarm, and in tears.

Mrs. Spottiswoode accompanied Sir John Wetheral and Christobelle, as they escorted Lady Ennismore to the home of her single-

hood. Julia did not speak during the little journey; but her eyes filled with tears, as they rested on each well-known object in her route. Her emotion was excessive as the carriage entered the Lodges of Wetheral, and the avenue produced a thousand reminiscences of the past, which occasioned a strong hysteric. But there were those near her who tempered the blow to the sufferer, and softened her regrets by kind commiseration. Her father's voice alone appeared to fail in bringing calm to her heart.

"Let me not hear that voice!" she exclaimed, "for it brings to my mind how mournfully it implored me to avoid repentance! Every thing I see remains unchanged; it is only Clara and myself who were doomed to sink into death and wretchedness! My mother — cruel mother! — it is all my mother!" Oppressed with grief, Julia sank into silence, and she suffered herself to be carried into the rooms which once constituted the sleeping apartments and dressing-room of herself and Anna Maria. Julia placed her hand upon her heart, but she did not give utterance to her thoughts, as she glanced round upon well-remembered furniture, and fixed her eyes upon the large mirror which

had reflected her gay appearance upon her bridal-morn. Mrs. Spottiswoode, her bridesmaid, stood by her; and her father held her hand, as he had affectionately held it when she kneeled to receive his blessing as Julia Ennismore.

This powerful picture of the past affected her heart. She threw herself at her father's feet.

"Forgive me!—forgive my obstinate presumption, papa! I feel how truly you spoke! how blindly I followed my own judgment! This is a bitter stroke to me! All are here who did not advocate my ambitious choice!—but where are they who told me I should be greatly envied? Where is my mother, who prophecied worldly happiness, and told me I was right to persevere? Who assured me of bright realities, and years of happy freedom?"

Julia rose from her kneeling attitude, and the expression of her eyes was fearfully wild, as she held out her hands to her father.

"Why did she tell me my father loved lowly things, and could not comprehend a woman's heart? Why did she tell me Ennismore was easily influenced, and that a wife's word would supersede a mother's management? Has it been so? Have I not suffered scorn, and ridicule,

and banishment, in silence? Have I not endured a thousand regrets—a thousand struggles —a thousand insults?"

Julia paused as her eye again wandered over the mirror, and she saw the reflection of her own wasted figure and pale countenance. For one moment her whole attention was engrossed by the change which had taken place in her person. She gazed at her thin form, and raised her hands to examine the wasted fingers which had lost their once plump roundness and extreme beauty. She then fled from the apartment.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Sorrows, renewed by the associations which pressed upon her mind, impelled Lady Ennismore to seek her mother's apartments. Mrs. Bevan was attending her mistress, and Julia's noiseless step glided across the carpeted floor of the dressing-room, where Lady Wetheral lay extended on the sofa, complaining to her attendant of her own wretched feelings.

"Bevan, I am very ill to-day: I cannot see Mrs. Tom Pynsent, or admit any one. My nerves become worse and worse, and I am in a dreadful state of tremour at this moment. I cannot hold my salts bottle, it falls out of my poor nervous fingers—I am very ill to-day."

Mrs. Bevan spoke pleasing words of comfort, but her ladyship rejected them.

"Don't talk nonsense, Bevan. I hate to hear people say things which are not likely to occur.

How can I expect to be well, when Miss Wetheral obstinately defies my wishes, and all my children are determined to fly in my face? I had a dream, too, last night, which increases my disorder; I dreamt I saw Lady Ennismore brilliantly dressed, walking in a procession; and she walked so stately in jewels, and her rank placed her so high among the great ones, that I was proud of my daughter, and I smiled to see her in grandeur. Poor Julia, where is she *now!*"

"She is here," exclaimed Lady Ennismore, standing before her mother, with her thin hands crossed upon her bosom; "here is the envied Countess of Ennismore!"

Lady Wetheral gazed upon the vision in dumb amazement.

"Look at me," continued Julia, "look at my figure, and tell me if you believed all this would come to pass? When you assured me that wealth and rank was happiness and virtue, did you think I should return a fugitive, to seek shelter at your hands?"

"Julia!" gasped Lady Wetheral, "Julia! go! who are *you?*"

"Go?" exclaimed Lady Ennismore, "where shall I go? To Clara? Shall I rest with poor

Clara? Must I be laid by poor Clara, to find peace after my sacrifice, my absence, and my griefs?"

The tremour which attacked Lady Wetheral's frame was alarming. It precluded speech: she hid her face with her hands, as Lady Ennismore proceeded.

"For quitting a husband's home, I may be censured and avoided by the world, for it may never know my provocations and my struggles, but I should not be turned from my mother's presence! I should not be banished by the author of all my misery, as if she had no part in the misery which I endure!"

"Do not say so—oh, do not say so! Do not blame me, as Clara did!" Lady Wetheral sobbed aloud.

"I reproach no one," answered Lady Ennismore, mournfully. "I reproach no one, though I was promised happiness as the wife of Ennismore. Where is that happiness? You foretold it, mother. You said I should for ever enjoy wealth and station, and become the envied gaze of thousands! Where is it all?"

"Cease, cease!" cried Lady Wetheral, wrung by feelings of alarm and self-reproach. "I wished you to marry Pynsent, Julia!"

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"For quitting a husband's home, I may be censured and avoided by the world, for it may never know my provocations and my struggles, but I should not be turned from my mother's presence! I should not be banished by the author of all my misery, as if she had no part in the misery which I endure!"

"Do not say so—oh, do not say so! Do not blame me, as Clara did!" Lady Wetheral sobbed aloud.

"I reproach no one," answered Lady Ennismore, mournfully. "I reproach no one, though I was promised happiness as the wife of Ennismore. Where is that happiness? You foretold it, mother. You said I should for ever enjoy wealth and station, and become the envied gaze of thousands! Where is it all?"

"Cease, cease!" cried Lady Wetheral, wrung by feelings of alarm and self-reproach. "I wished you to marry Pynsent, Julia!"

cared for," said Lady Ennismore, releasing her hand, and sinking upon the floor in despair.

"I told you," continued Lady Wetheral, becoming almost vehement in her manner, "I told you many things might occur to distress your heart, but nothing could arise to make you an object of ridicule to the world, except your own folly. You have flown from Lord Ennismore's house — who will receive you? who receives a truant wife?"

"I was miserable," said the prostrate Julia.

"How few are otherwise," returned her mother, "if all secrets were disclosed? Happiness is a nonsensical word — a rock to shipwreck romantic hopes. We may not command happiness, but we *can* command external blessings. With every luxury that reflected honour upon human beings, what right had you and Clara to be otherwise than content?"

"How cold—how cruel to speak so harshly!" ejaculated Lady Ennismore.

"Had you not rank?" continued Lady Wetheral — "had you not a princely home — an earl's coronet? Had you not all the world can bestow, when you fled from your husband's protection?"

"I fled from treachery and from infamy!"

"Infamy! Who dares report of infamy?" Lady Wetheral started to her feet, and supported herself by grasping the back of a chair. "Has my daughter, Lady Ennismore, allowed herself to become—? has the breath of suspicion breathed upon a Wetheral!—has *one* suspicion glanced upon you, Julia?"

"I have flown to my father, to avoid my own reproach," cried Julia; "I care not for the world—I have flown to escape the reproaches of my own heart."

"Folly — madness!" observed her mother—"flown from your heart! What heart had you which was not wedded to your station—to the eminence in life upon which you were called to stand above your companions? Are you not wedded to the title of Ennismore? Are you not the proud wife of a British peer?—an earl's wife? Is not your heart hid behind the folds of your ermine, and buried in the magnificence of your lot?"

"No, no—it is not there!" cried Julia, clasping her hands—"it is not there! My heart was given to kindness. I would have loved him faithfully, but I was banished from his presence—second to his artful mother in his thoughts—betrayed by the person I most trusted—proscribed

as the mistress of his house. Many women would have resented the indignities I have borne —but I have flown from the temptations which surrounded me, and my father has given me shelter. Oh! you have sacrificed me, but do not upbraid me—I have done no wrong to any one. Why should *you* look hardly upon me, who promised me happiness, and have broken its fulfilment? Poor Clara! how we have suffered for our fault. My father warned me of my wickedness!"

"Did *I* not warn you, Lady Ennismore?" asked Lady Wetheral, with a raised complexion, as she beheld, unmoved, poor Julia's suppliant attitude. "Did *I* not say, I scorned a woman who was mean enough to seek the world's upbraiding by her conduct? You were the Countess of Ennismore—your flight has brought down obloquy upon the name. Who will believe the statement of a runaway? Who will believe the fugitive Lady Ennismore has been unaccompanied in her flight? The voice of the world will be loud in censure upon the step you have taken."

"Oh, my father, my father! save me from the world—save me from reproaches like these!" exclaimed Julia, rising from her prostrate attitude, and endeavouring to quit the room; but

her mother caught her dress, and detained her. There was something awful in the expression of her countenance, as she addressed Lady Ennismore.

"If a mother sacrifices her time and endeavours to form a child's happiness, has she not a right to expect its completion? Did I not act for you—think for you—and labour for you? Did I not place you in affluence and grandeur? Are you not the Countess of Ennismore? Tell me, are you not Countess of Ennismore, the mistress of princely Bedinfield?"

"I am the unfortunate and unhappy wife of Lord Ennismore," answered Julia, "the nominal mistress of Bedinfield, but the real proprietor of only sorrow and degradation."

"Away with such folly!" cried Lady Wetheral, with vehemence; "let me not hear such mad complaints, such horrible madness! Have you not all that is coveted by human beings?—state, high rank, wealth, and influence? What does your arrogant heart covet *now?* What do you presume to wish, beyond the splendid lot you have obtained?"

"Happiness—I ask for happiness! I ask for my husband's heart—I ask for domestic peace," replied Julia, pressing her forehead with her

trembling hands. "I ask for the simple pleasures of domestic peace. I will not accept grandeur without them!"

"You have brought public remark upon the name of Wetheral," resumed her mother, her eyes darting fire. "You have betrayed the confidence of your mother, who hoped to see her daughter an envied creature! You have thrown away the jewels of life, to grasp at shadows. Happiness!—*who* is happy?—not those who are born to stand apart in grandeur—not those upon whom the eyes of the multitude gaze in admiration. It may be a word bandied by the humble, to balance the evils of poverty, and give a zest to lowly destinies — but the great ones heed it not. *They* live in a sphere set apart from grovelling notions — they spurn the folly of romantic, sickly fancy, to hold on their course like meteors! I am a parent most miserable. I am deprived of all I laboured to advance. My heart was anchored upon the glorious destiny of three children, who have betrayed their high calling—but Bell has done the worst. A dukedom was offered her!—a dukedom was tendered to her, I say! and the puny coward struck it from her! —oh, that hour to a mother's heart!... "

Lady Wetheral's vehemence overpowered her

strength. The sudden and unaccountable appearance of her daughter, without any previous warning, almost led her to suppose a spirit from the dead had risen to taunt her with her deep disappointments. It seemed as if a spirit from another world had sought her, to jeer and mock at her misery as a defeated mother, and that form assumed the likeness of her banished Julia. What! had she heard the word "infamy" spoken?—did she hear that Lady Ennismore had flown from her husband? Was this to be added to Clara's death, and Christobelle's ingratitude? Was she indeed to endure this accumulated burthen of crushed hopes? — to see *all* her long years of anxious efforts destroyed, and behold the very beings she had raised so high, turn to rend her? What spirit could bend under such fearful ingratitude, that possessed one spark of *her* indomitable determinations?

A deep pause succeeded. Julia still listened, with her face buried in her hands, and her dress was yet in the grasp of her mother's hand, when a cry from Mrs. Bevan startled her. Lady Ennismore looked up in terror. She beheld her incensed parent standing before her, in the attitude of reproach, but her eyes were dull, and her

form had become rigid: contending passions were warring with terrible violence in her heart.

It was a fearful and affecting scene to witness, but it could not long last. Lady Ennismore's terror at her unfortunate mother's state obliterated for the moment her own sorrows, and she flew to assist Mrs. Bevan in her cares. Sir John Wetheral and Christobelle were instantly summoned, and the Castle became a scene of alarm and confusion. Mrs. Spottiswoode was again a true-hearted and valuable friend in their affliction.

Lady Wetheral sunk into a long illness. Her strife of heart—the strife of a high and determined spirit contending with bitter mortifications in all those things which she had so fondly cherished—had nearly proved fatal to her frame, and she was long vibrating between life and death. But her naturally good constitution, and the unremitting attentions of her daughters, overcame the attacks of a dangerous malady, and gradually Lady Wetheral became again convalescent. The body slowly acquired some portion of renewed health, but the mind was fixed in gloomy irritability. Nothing could exceed her ladyship's unbearable tyranny to those gentle beings who strove to soothe her long confinement. The victims of her ambitious projects

were now the objects of constant petty and vexatious attacks. Christobelle had one near her who could lure her disquiets into happy tranquillity — but Lady Ennismore almost sunk under their distressing influence.

Sir John Wetheral bore all his trials with the resignation of a man who received good and evil things from his Maker's hands, and accepted them as means of evidencing his patience and resignation. He endured his lady's most disagreeable taunts with the fortitude belonging to his estimable character: he only appeared to suffer when those taunts were levelled at the heart-broken, gentle Julia. Lady Wetheral's tyrannical temper seemed irrecoverable even by the operation of time, or gentle forbearance. Mrs. Bevan remarked "that her lady's eyes and manner were peculiarly vehement in their expression, during her reproaches addressed to Lady Ennismore." It *must* have been a powerful feeling which could produce such a change of manner in one whose whole existence had been devoted to the exercise of self-command, and who had ever deprecated the bad taste and uselessness of "scenes;" it must have been an overwhelming feeling of ambition trampled to the earth, which bore down

a mind so keenly alive, so restless in its purposes, and so successful in its schemes.

Christobelle had the blessing of Sir John Spottiswoode's society, to balance her many hours of disquietude. She could turn to him for happiness, when her spirit was sad, and, under his soothings, her mother's harsh remarks were forgotten. Every disagreeable feeling passed away in the sunshine of his presence. She only bent, in grateful acknowledgment, to the Being who had committed her infancy to her father's care, to receive his wise admonitions, and be cautioned to renounce the fearful dictates of ambition. Christobelle saw how it had lured its victims to woe. She knew it had destroyed the happiness of Julia—that it had aimed the death-blow to Clara—that it had worked desolation upon her mother. Every one who drank of the cup which a reckless ambition presented to their lips had tasted a deadly poison, which slowly and surely produced desolation of heart. Christobelle felt she had been spared. She had not been overwhelmed by its cold precepts: she had received strength to endure oppression, and had not bartered peace of mind for the empty glare of worldly distinction. Christobelle was indeed

grateful, as she pondered these things in her mind.

Lady Ennismore was called to a less fortunate destiny. Her spirits were broken by the continual and ruthless observations which were showered upon her by her irritable parent, under the pressure of time unemployed, and the total failure of resource. Lady Wetheral's mind turned to the past, for materials to employ her weakened energies; and the past could only give back harassing recollections. Such recollections produced a constant state of irritation, which was hurtful to herself, and intolerable to those around her. Wetheral Castle appeared the grave of every hope, and the "*oubliette*" to rational, tranquil comfort. The heart of Lady Ennismore was depressed beyond recall, by continued and unsuccessful efforts to appear cheerful under accumulated suffering. It was impossible to give satisfaction to an exacting and imperious mother. She could only weep in privacy, and pray to be "laid by Clara."

Mrs. Spottiswoode was unwearied in her kind visits during Lady Wetheral's illness. The Penelope of former days was the same attached friend at the present hour; and Lady Ennismore felt how blessed was the possession of a gentle

heart, which had clung to her through good and evil report—which never exacted selfish sacrifices, or shrunk from the task of enduring much, to soften the distresses of an uncomplaining spirit. Mrs. Spottiswoode bore the petulant remarks of Lady Wetheral with patient good-humour. If the "blood of the Wycherlys" rose occasionally into her cheeks, and latent fires sparkled in her eye, the door of her lips were hermetically sealed, and she never resented the offensive petulance of a defeated and angry manœuvrer. Her only desire aimed at warding off for a few hours the painful observations which must otherwise have been levelled at two unoffending objects.

Lady Wetheral did not object to receive Mrs. Spottiswoode. However strongly her character approximated to that of her aunt Pynsent in its outline, her manners were less abrupt, and her temper more yielding. Mrs. Spottiswoode had also "crept in" so silently and regularly, that a visit every other day was considered a thing of course; and if Lady Wetheral had any thing particularly disagreeable or offensive to say, she contrived to say it to Mrs. Spottiswoode. Mrs. Spottiswoode bore every thing with smiles: she

knew it spared the feelings of her own friend — the suffering, the injured, and dependent Julia.

Lady Wetheral confined herself entirely to her apartments, and declined all society. She derived no satisfaction from the visits of friends, whom she was sure came on purpose to deride her sorrows. She particularly commanded to be denied to Mrs. Pynsent. She told Mrs. Spottiswoode it was unpleasant to be restricted from communion with her neighbours, but she must be aware her aunt Pynsent was inadmissable from her loud tone of voice, and uncouth way of blurting out offensive remarks. Her aunt was a misery in a sick room, and she only wondered how Clara could endure it, to the exclusion of the mother who had promoted her marriage, and endured so much to effect it.

Lady Wetheral also confided to Mrs. Spottiswoode her opinions upon Christobelle's folly.

"Your brother, Mrs. Spottiswoode, is a very gentlemanly man, but a poor baronet is a sad match for Bell—I will never lend myself to it. I know Sir John allows him to visit here, and Bell is engaged to him in some way or other, I dare say. Perhaps they are waiting for my death? Bell refused a dukedom, and is content to accept a Worcestershire baronet! Can you

believe any thing so degrading? — and waiting, too, for her poor mother's death! This is very dreadful! How can I look any of my neighbours in the face? I am told Lord Farnborough is going to marry Fanny Ponsonby: it serves Bell quite right, and I hope she will feel it severely. A pleasant sight it will be to see the Forfar equipage dashing by, while Bell is only a poor baronet's wife in a britzska. I cannot endure such thoughts. Bevan, where are my salts?"

"But, my dear Lady Wetheral, if my brother makes Christobelle happy, and if he indulges her with all the comforts of life, what more can a human being require?"

Lady Wetheral shuddered.

"The comforts of life! Bread and cheese to eat, and a stuff gown and straw bonnet to wear—is this the vulgar and popular idea of existence? You, Penelope, have married into the family, and are justified in upholding it, but I will never see Bell, if she can endure degradation! My health is sacrificed to outraged feelings! Lady Ennismore, if it is not too much trouble, will you be so considerate as to move this cushion a little higher. Your ladyship has had little practice, I fancy, in the nursing department: it never occurs to you how much I am suffering."

Lady Ennismore silently adjusted the cushion, but the allusion to her banishment from her lord's sick room, renewed the grief of her heart: tears sprang to her patient, expressive eyes. This could not be overlooked by Penelope Spottiswoode.

"Lady Wetheral, I demand, and insist upon the necessity of Lady Ennismore's removal for a few days to Lidham. I must not allow you all to waste away in witnessing each other's depression. Christobelle and Sir John will take Julia's place, while I run away with my friend this very morning. I shall not return to Lidham till you are ready to accompany me, Julia."

There was "a Pynsent tone" in Mrs. Spottiswoode's speech, which Lady Wetheral felt unable to contend against: her ladyship detested that *Hatton* expression of voice. She replied languidly, with an injured and offended air,

"Pray do as you please, Mrs. Spottiswoode. Every one has done, and, I suppose, *will* do, as they please with me. I am too feeble to resist violent resolutions. I beg to decline having any one forced upon me. Lady Ennismore has renounced control of any kind, and, of course, she will continue to act as she thinks proper, without consulting her mother. Sir John and Christo-

belle, I suppose, will visit me, without being 'offered.' I conclude my family will relieve my solitude voluntarily, though I am considered of secondary importance. Bevan, where is my pocket-handkerchief?"

"In your hand, my lady."

"Oh, very well. I wish I was equally blind to more distressing annoyances. I wish I could lose sight as easily of other things."

Mrs. Spottiswoode turned a resolutely deaf ear to all covert attacks. It was imperative, in her opinion, to withdraw Lady Ennismore to Lidham, and the harsh conduct of Lady Wetheral only riveted her resolution. Sir John concurred in her views. He was aware his daughter endured much, and he wished her to be removed altogether from a scene so destructive to her peace. It was impossible to hope Julia could ever regain tranquillity, when the wounds of her heart were torn open by daily and hourly invective. Christobelle and himself would attend the querulous invalid, in patient hope that time would soften the asperity proceeding from a diseased mind, but he saw the absolute necessity of withdrawing Lady Ennismore from her attendance. Sir John Wetheral

hoped she would remain a long season in the society and hospitality of Lidham.

Yet Julia quitted her father with great reluctance. She knew her sister was happy, and supported by the occasional visits of Sir John Spottiswoode. Her heart was occupied by a powerful attachment, and sorrow had not thrown a mantle of gloom over *her* young visions yet. Her affection was blessed by a father's approval, and the smiles of rejoicing friends; yes, Christobelle could contemplate her futurity fearlessly —but who would, or could, pour balm upon her father's solitary hours? His study was still a sanctuary, but he carried into its precincts a disturbed and heavy spirit. Julia could not bear the idea of quitting her father.

Mrs. Spottiswoode smoothed every thought which could ruffle her friend's equanimity, and planed away all difficulties. She unburdened her mind to the four friends who surrounded her, as she hastily partook of sandwiches.

"My dear Sir John, I have achieved a scheme, which will set my Julia's heart at rest, and yours, too. I counsel you to keep the 'poor Worcestershire baronet' at Wetheral, till happier times arrive. Why should not he bear some share of the evil, when the good is before

him? and by his sparkling eyes, and intelligent glances at Christobelle, I judge he is willing to undertake the task. This is my advice, as far as concerns *yourself;* now for my brother-in-law: listen, young man, and be guided! I counsel you to be gentle mannered, and prompt in action, as I have been. *Creep in,* as I have done; and bear all irritating remarks, as I have borne them. Learn to be enduring, patient, and silent, and I will undertake to promise you sufficient success. Who undertakes to refute my words?"

Mrs. Spottiswoode looked round at her auditors, but there was no refutation. Sir John Spottiswoode alone replied, and he only spoke his eager wishes to assist in tranquillizing Lady Wetheral's objections to his suit. He would wait in patience and persevering attentions, to attain that blessed reward of his labours, if it was required, even for years.

"Six months will do, John, if you are politic. Sir John Wetheral, pray lead Lady Ennismore to my carriage, and I will follow, after a few words in a corner with my brother."

Sir John led out his daughter, while Christobelle clung to her sister's hand. She was going to lose her for an indefinite period, and she

should miss her gentle voice and affectionate smile. Spottiswoode would be with her, and she could not but own his society was a charm to balance a thousand ills. Nevertheless, she must miss Julia every hour. She would have the satisfaction, however, of knowing how much she would be prized by Mr. and Mrs. Spottiswoode.

Mrs. Spottiswoode did not long detain her friends. Her words were few, and decisive.

"John, that unhappy woman is as mad as a March hare. I never can believe her sane, therefore, I bear with her. Let her abuse you and your friends; and allow her to speak whatever she thinks of aunty Pynsent, and I am sure you will become necessary to her. Her manners are so completely changed, that I am confident she is deranged, and it is no use quarrelling with mad people."

"It is an extraordinary method of making oneself acceptable, Penelope. I am not sure I can endure to hear my friends abused, but I will endeavour to be pleasing, and you may be sure I shall 'creep in' after Christobelle. Once fairly admitted into the invalid's room, you need not fear my second dismissal."

"Very well, I have no more to say, then. I

will not relinquish Julia, as long as I can prevail upon her to remain at Lidham. She is enduring too much for human nature to bear. Farewell." Mrs. Spottiswoode then joined her friends.

Sir John Wetheral pressed Mrs. Spottiswoode's hand, as he assisted her into the carriage. "Accept," he said, "the grateful thanks of a father for this kind and thoughtful step. May *you* never be called to sorrows which your warm heart is seeking to alleviate in your friends!"

Mrs. Spottiswoode returned the pressure.

"I do not ask you to come to us very often, because I know you cannot exist long from Julia; but be sure you always bring good news with you from Wetheral. God blessyou all!"

CHAPTER XXXII.

Lady Ennismore recovered some degree of tranquillity under the soothing influences of her friends, who congregated round her at Lidham, but her spirits never recovered their tone of elasticity. She met the Pynsents with severe distress, and struggled visibly for fortitude, as recollections of the past crowded to memory; but when that fearful interview was once effected, Anna Maria's society was productive of much good. Tom Pynsent was unchanged; he was the same excellent and honourable creature: he was an affectionate and valued husband; they appeared to be, and were, the happiest couple in the world. No wonder Anna Maria looked younger and handsomer than ever. Her heart was at rest. How warmly had her father spoken of Tom Pynsent's good qualities. Alas! *she* had preferred splendid misery, and was now

reaping a harvest of woe. She would not, dared not, think too deeply.

Lady Ennismore could contemplate Mrs. Boscawen with unmixed satisfaction. She was changed in person, and improved in manner. Mr. Boscawen was proud of his lady; and how could he help it, since he was, in her eyes, the best and handsomest of created beings? It must be a new and delightful existence to the once alarming, grim-looking, though excellent, Mr. Boscawen.

The sight and sounds of those she loved was of important benefit to Lady Ennismore. The accents of affection, the voice of mirth, the forms of her long banished friends gliding before her, roused her dormant energies, and awakened her to the joys of life. She paid short visits to Hatton and Brierly, to see her nephews and nieces; and, though her lips never uttered a remark, Mrs. Spottiswoode fancied her more languid and pale after her brief absence. Doubtless, the "rural sports" at both places were too powerful for her weakened frame and shattered nerves.

Lady Ennismore continued three months with Mrs. Spottiswoode. Sir John Wetheral brought a bulletin daily of his ladies' health, and each

account was less favourable in its purport. Christobelle wrote despondingly upon the subject to her sister. She regretted to say her poor Spottiswoode failed in all his patient exertions to win her mother's approbation. She was happy to think there was no cause of complaint against him of any serious nature. His crime consisted in having stepped in between her poor mother's ambition and a dukedom; and this would ever be unpardonable in her eyes. Her mother was relentless towards Spottiswoode. She would not pronounce his name, or receive a message from him. She only alluded to him as the "poor baronet," or "the man whom Sir John upheld." It was vain to hope against hope. Her mother's dislike grew more powerful as her strength declined, and it would end only in the grave. Her mother received no one; she appeared to have renounced society, and her movements were exclusively confined to her own range of apartments. Mrs. Daniel Higgins was admitted frequently, because she had been the depository of her lady's secrets in days of yore, and was now a patient listener to her regrets; but, beyond that, all was silent at Wetheral. Christobelle considered her father in much better spirits. He had become apparently reconciled to her

mother's change of habits; and he was more cheerful, more called forth, she thought, than when her mother was the dominant spirit. It might be that his mind was at rest concerning his children; that he was no longer dreading plots and systems, and was gratified by the constant society of Spottiswoode, who was so attentive and companionable to him. She could not tell, but so it was. She was distressed to think they were so happy together, when her poor mother's situation was so cheerless, and her health so visibly declining!

Such was the tenor of Christobelle's communications to Lidham, and they renewed Lady Ennismore's anxiety to return to Wetheral. She longed to relieve Christobelle from some portion of her fatigues; and, above all, her spirit flew back to her father. She could never sufficiently value his parental anxieties, or the protection he was affording her sorrow. A father's presence was a shield from every worldly blast; and the perfect seclusion of Wetheral Castle suited best with her present state. Lidham was almost too gay, though she only met looks and words of kindness and approbation. It was time that Christobelle should also enjoy a period of happy communion with Sir John Spottiswoode; and

that period could not arrive, unless some one assumed the reins in her place, and bore the disagreeables of the nursing department. Mrs. Spottiswoode's good sense acquiesced entirely in Lady Ennismore's reasonings.

"My dear friend, *you* are perfectly right, and *I* am only perfectly sorry to lose you. I anticipate much comfort in the present state of things, however dismally Christobelle represents them. You will all be happier at Wetheral, and I shall see your face beaming with smiles, in spite of Lady Wetheral's monastic retirement. Don't look distressed, Julia; I am going to explain myself."

"My mother has received an incurable wound, Penelope!"

"I know that. Lady Wetheral has received an incurable wound in her ambition, and that has closed her hopes and pleasures on this side the grave. She has no child to plan for—not one now to sacrifice. All is ended which employed her mind, and fed the craving passion of her soul. Her resources are cut off, and she will never more resume her position in society. Is it not wisely ordered? If Lady Wetheral recovered her health, would she not be scheming for her grandchildren, and pouring her besetting

foible into their innocent minds? My dear Julia, enough misery has been originated. Let it end here. Let us not wish it otherwise."

Lady Ennismore could not refute her friend's argument. Mrs. Spottiswoode continued.

"Wetheral Castle will never, perhaps, resume its festive scenes, for there has been too much of evil connected with their remembrance; but you will enjoy profound peace of heart, and receive your friends without alarm. If Lady Wetheral remains secluded in her apartments, there is no reason why the rest of the family should not enjoy themselves: forgive me if I say it will prove *true* enjoyment."

Mrs. Spottiswoode spoke truly. Wetheral Castle did become a home of domestic peace, because its restless mistress no longer wielded the sceptre of power, to transform the elements of good into the instruments of evil. Lady Wetheral sunk into ill health and apathy, irrecoverable. Her mind and body seemed stunned into torpor, by two events which she had not foreseen, and could not parry—the refusal of a dukedom by Christobelle, and the flight of Lady Ennismore from her home. These two events were ever upon her thoughts, and in her speech, because "she had particularly arranged each

splendid match, and was doomed to be foiled by her own children in their accomplishment. She knew her energies were worn down, and her strength exhausted. She could not walk three steps from her sofa without fatigue, and the least noise produced severe nervous attacks. She was a pretty specimen of maternal cares! She advised all parents to allow their headstrong daughters to marry whoever would encumber themselves with them; for marry they would, and it was hopeless to endeavour to lead their tastes in a proper channel. She expected Mrs. Higgins would let *her* little girl grow up in insubordination, and the child would most likely marry a bricklayer, instead of looking up to a man in a well established grocery-business. She detested mean minds."

Lord Ennismore and his mother, the Dowager-countess, appeared again at Bedinfield. Her ladyship's point was gained. She had recovered entire control over the destinies of Bedinfield, freed from continual alarms, lest her son should escape her powerful influence, and become infatuated by the loveliness and yielding disposition of his gentle wife. But she did not long enjoy the fruits of her unnatural conduct. Ere a year had elapsed after the separation recorded,

Lord Ennismore sank into the family vault at Bedinfield, unwept and unhonoured, save by the generous-hearted creature whom he had not the capacity to appreciate.

When Lady Ennismore received the information of her unfortunate lord's decease, she wept to think how desolate had been the existence of a human being, born to become the tool and victim of his mother's insatiable love of power; and she wept to remember he had died without the consolation of being watched over by a wife, who would have acted honourably and faithfully in her duties.

Sir John Wetheral also suffered. He felt a conviction that his own want of firmness had fostered his lady's ambitious turn of mind; and he dwelt upon the melancholy idea that his own hand had bestowed, however unwillingly—that his consent had been extorted, however painful to himself—to give a beloved child to the imbecile Lord Ennismore. It was a thought he never could banish from his memory, and it pained him most when Julia's society became his greatest comfort. It was, however, vain to regret the past. Sir John's mild nature was unequal to contend with the persevering system adopted by his lady, and he could never com-

prehend or combat effectually her unceasing efforts to forward her views upon the minds of her children. The Gertrude of his early affections was now severed from his companionship, and he turned to Julia, to receive from her hands the care and attention necessary to his future comfort.

Lady Ennismore fully requited her parent's hope. She sought no society beyond her own family, and the little circle of friends who had ever valued her affectionate heart. Mrs. Spottiswoode, the friend and beloved companion—that solace to earthly tribulations — that gift tendered to few —was near her. Hatton was a home of affection, and Brierly threw open its portals with triumph at her approach. All had respected and honoured the hapless wife, and all surrounded the released widow in silent gratulation. Mrs. Pynsent publicly declared "It was a deep trick of that woman Ennismore, whom she never could endure; and if the poor young Julia Wetheral had not fallen into the hands of two she-Philistines, she never would have married that sickly little chap, whom the mother led about by the nose. Some things which should be nameless were already come to pass, and she hoped Old Nick would fly away with all manœuvring

mothers. A certain lady was shorn of her beams, who expected to command the world; and after brandishing her arms, and catching all the prime matches up, she was cut down into a mighty small space, with an evil conscience to chat with. If Lady Ennismore would be advised, she should counsel her to change her name and title, by marrying a comfortable Shropshire lad. There were plenty unprovided for."

But Lady Ennismore declined all thoughts of marriage, and devoted herself to the comforts of her parents. Colonel Neville wrote, at the expiration of her mourning, and he laid claim to her compassion, in consideration of the patience and constancy which had accompanied his involuntary and fervent attachment. He had condemned himself to a perpetual banishment, even from the country which she inhabited. But now that the bar was withdrawn, the hour of disclosure was arrived, and Julia must have respected the love which consumed him. She could bear witness that he had never breathed an unhallowed sentiment, or endeavoured to take advantage of her situation, during their long and constant association in Florence.

Julia sighed as she read the declaration of

Neville, but her heart renounced a second engagement. "No," she wrote in reply to her lover's epistle—"no, my heart has suffered too much disquietude to enter upon fresh ties. I feel a calmness and consolation in watching over my father's comfort, and taking charge of my stricken mother, which my married life denied me. That portion of my existence was a period of deep misery, and it has broken down my hopes and my spirits. Be happy, Neville, with a woman who has not been called to suffering, and forget one who will never more trust in man, or in herself. I will not give hope, for you do not deserve to be treated lightly, and I cannot now meet your wishes. May I soon hear you have met with a woman deserving your esteem, and that your days are devoted to her happiness. My own days are consecrated to the father whose counsel I would not heed, and who has suffered so much through my criminal folly."

And what shall be said of Clarissa? Her portion was not the cup of bitterness, though her patience was severely tested. Lady Wetherel became indifferent to all passing events so gradually, and her mind crept so little into any thing resembling [illegible]

immediate gratification, that Mrs. Daniel Higgins adventured to touch lightly upon the subject, during one of her visits.

"I am happy, my lady, to be hearing of Miss Chrystal's likelihood, at last, to marry Sir John Spottiswoode. Higgins thinks it a very pretty match, and he has visited Alverton more than once, and admires the place extremely. For ever and a day!—to think of Miss Chrystal's turn being come!"

"I know nothing about it, Thompson, and I don't care. The Worcestershire man shall never enter *my* room, though he is quite good enough for a young lady who refused a dukedom. If Julia would attract the old Duke of Forfar, now she is at liberty, I should still recover my health; but I am laid on the shelf. No one cares about my health. Lady Ennismore might easily win his Grace; only, I dare say, she would run away from him, as she did from Lord Ennismore."

Christobelle married Sir John Spottiswoode soon after Lady Wetheral's assurance to Mrs. Higgins that she "did not care" about the affair, and no one apprised her ladyship of the actual solemnization. She never asked who was the "Lady Spottiswoode" whom people talked

so much about, and always addressed her by the title of Miss Wetheral.

Did Christobelle ever repent her refusal of a dukedom, or experience a repentant feeling that she had given her whole heart to the husband of her choice? No. Life brings too many cares to allow of perfect enjoyment upon earth, but Christobelle never regretted the vows she paid at the altar: she never regretted the hour when she became the bride of Spottiswoode, and exchanged Wetheral Castle for the tranquil groves of Alverton.

THE END.

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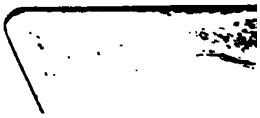
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